The North American Review

Dial M(otorist) for Murder

The Great Society: Conservative View

Tom Dooley or St. Thomas à Do?

The Absence of Valdemar

Low Blue Man

An Heir for Horowitz

Fiction, Poetry, Departments, and Reviews

Volume 250 *Number One* *75 cents*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MILLERSVILLE, PA

IUB

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY BOOKSELLERS, Inc.

30 Irving Place, New York, N. Y. 10003

Telephone (212) 673-6220 Cables: MEIHOLM NEW YORK

Specialists
in
American and European
Scholarly Books and Periodicals

Books and Subscriptions

We supply all currently available books and serial publications to libraries and scholars. Among our customers are many of the leading universities of the U. S., the British Commonwealth and European Continent. Subscription orders from libraries all over the world are handled efficiently with special attention given to difficult to obtain material and claims.

Periodicals

We maintain a substantial stock of back issues of scholarly and scientific periodicals in all subject matters and supply complete sets, partial runs, single volumes and issues.

Librarians are invited to send us regularly lists of desiderata which are checked upon receipt.

Accumulations of duplicates and backfiles no longer required are purchased by us at favorable prices. Large collections can be inspected personally by one of our representatives.

Please write for our current catalogues and leaflets indicating your special fields of interest.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WANTED: Subscribers, any size, shape, color or condition. Girl students abroad or at home. Young ad men on their way up; doctors, lawyers, merchants, shoppers in big department stores, automobile owners, taxpayers and -evaders. People in need of entertainment, information, argument. The garrulous, effusive, crotchety; writers of letters to the editor (signed or unsigned), loners, philanthropists, beatniks, inflated intellectuals. In a word, a reader with $3.00. Reply form below.

Subscription Department
The North American Review
Mount Vernon, Iowa

Enclose $3.00 for each subscription to The North American Review. (Four Issues)

Name .....

Address .....

City..... State..... Zip #.....

Subscription Department
The North American Review
Mount Vernon, Iowa

Enclose $3.00 for each subscription to The North American Review. (Four Issues)

Name .....

Address .....

City..... State..... Zip #.....

Subscription Department
The North American Review
Mount Vernon, Iowa

Enclose $3.00 for each subscription to The North American Review. (Four Issues)

Name .....

Address .....

City..... State..... Zip #.....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contributors

A. FARRELL BORENSTEIN is a Chicagoan by birth, spent 10 years in Louisiana, and recently returned to the Midwest. Her work has appeared in *The Carolina Quarterly* and *The Reconstructionist.*

WILLIAM BRADY works.

ALLAN C. BROWNFELD, B.C.L., the recipient of a $500 *Wall Street Journal* award, has served in an editorial capacity with the *Houston Press,* the *Virginia Gazette,* and *Analysis.* His articles have appeared in *Modern Age, Human Events, The New South,* and *The New Guard.* He is editor of the *Virginia Young Republican Reporter,* and wrote speeches in 1964 for George Bush, Republican candidate for the Senate in Texas. At present he is "a member of the faculty of St. Stephen's School."

NICHOLAS CROME is a well-digger in Colorado. He has published his poems previously in *The Paris Review* and *The Massachusetts Review.*

BRUCE DRAKE knew Tom Dooley.

Stories by ALYCE INGRAM, St. Paul, Minn., have appeared in the *Negro Digest, The Humanist,* and *Means Magazine.* This is her first appearance in NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

LESLIE M. LECRON is by his own admission a California State Certified Psychologist.

Poetry by PHILIP LEVINE appeared in our first and fourth issues. The Stone Wall Press (Iowa City) recently re-issued his book, *On The Edge,* in paper.

RITA MADOCS is a newcomer to the English language as well as to NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

MORRIS POTTER of Cedar Rapids is a free-lance photographer.

DAVID O. RANKIN exists.

Poems, tiny and larger, by DAVID RAY appeared in our second and fourth issues. His first book of poetry is *X-Rays* (Cornell University Press).

CHARLES J. SHAGOURY is a specialist in Radiology at Lowell General Hospital in Massachusetts.

LOUIS SIMPSON'S most recent book of verse is *At the End of the Open Road* (Wesleyan University Press). He is working on a book of his selected poems, to be published by Harcourt, Brace & World during the fall.

ANARCHIST'S DICTIONARY

Kinsey Report —
The adventures of a dirty old man

Adolescence —
The end of innocence and the beginning of folly

AMA —
A mechanics union

"God is love" —
A line on a lavatory wall

Hoover, Herbert —
The peoples' womb

Money —
The one curse not enjoyed by the poor

Nationalism —
The sin of Adam writ large

Prostitution —
A kindness toward philanderers

Roosevelt, Franklin —
The peoples' breast

Suicide —
Taking life too seriously

Superstition —
The religion of your neighbor

DAVID O. RANKIN

STEPHEN TUDOR writes fiction and poetry and plays in Portland. He once composed a sequence of thirty-one poems on Mount Vernon, Iowa.

GEORGE A. WEAVER teaches English at Siena College in New York. His work has appeared in *Epoch* and *Perspective.*

CHARLES WRIGHT is currently in Italy, on a Fulbright. He has appeared previously in *The Carleton Miscellany, Poetry Northwest* and *The Chelsea Review* as well as in our first issue. He has a friend in the C.I.A.

Reviewers include: WILLIAM A. STOPPEL, A. FARRELL BORENSTEIN, MARY BYERLY, MADGE KISTNER, ROBERT P. DANA, BERNARD E. RICHARDSON, JOSEPH B. BOARD, DAVID MEYER, LARRY SHINER, R. B. WEBER, RUSS DUBOIS, HARRY STRICKHAUSEN, GENEVA MEERS, RICHARD REICHARD, ARMARIUS, and DAVID JOHNSON For The Record.

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW is revived with the cooperation of
The Honorable Claiborne Pell, Senator from Rhode Island.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The North American Review

New Series: Volume II No. 1 Old Series: Volume 250

Staff

Editor:
Robert P. Dana

Managing Editor:
Bernard E. Richardson

Editors:
Science:
Philip R. Marshall

Politics:
Joseph B. Board, Jr.

Fiction:
Winifred M. Van Etten

Poetry:
Marvin Bell

Art:
R. T. McGlauchlin

Copy:
Richard W. Van Fossen

Eastern:
Jerome Mazzaro

Western:
John Durham
Henri Coulette

Advisory:
E. L. Mayo

Staff Artists:
Hugh Lifson
Wilbur West
Vivian Heywood
Pat McGlauchlin

Exec. Secretary:
Ruth Freeman

Staff:
Dorothy Ellison

CONTENTS

Contributors 2
Anarchist's Dictionary 2
Unloading Zone 4
A New Day poem *Philip Levine* 5
Pot on the Fire
- God and His Classmates *Benjamin M. Steigman* 6
- This Story *J. T. Locke* 6
- Pie for Breakfast *E. F. Wells* 7
- Prayer and President Starborg *Elmer F. Suderman* 8
- Letters Never Mailed Department 10
- Unrequired Reading 11

Possession poem *Philip Levine* 11
Tom Dooley or St. Thomas à Do? *Bruce Drake* 12
Low Blue Man *George A. Weaver* 14
Another Note to Thalia poem *Nicholas Crome* 19
Dial M(otorist) for Murder *Leslie LeCron* 20
The Original Investment *Alyce Ingram* 24
Point Defiance poem *Stephen Tudor* 27
Post-Mortem *Charles J. Shagoury* 28
The Absence of Valdemar *Rita Madocs* 32
The Elegant Home poem *David Ray* 40
The Great Society: Conservative View *Allan C. Brownfeld* 40
An Heir for Horowitz *A. Farrell Borenstein* 45
Book Reviews 51
What Chekhov Said poem *Louis Simpson* 52
Ottertail County poem *William Brady* 53
For the Record *David Johnson* 63
After Many a Summer poem *Charles Wright* 65

The North American Review, Spring, 1965, Old Series Volume 250, New Series Volume II Number 1. Published quarterly in March, June, September, and December. Publication, Editorial, and General Offices at Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa. 75¢ a copy, $3.00 a year in the U. S.; Canada and Latin America, $3.15; all other countries, $3.50. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelope with return postage. Printed in the U.S.A. by Economy Advertising Company, Iowa City, Iowa. Copyright 1965 by Cornell College. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Entered as second class matter at Mount Vernon, Iowa.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BIRTHDAY PARTY

The most traumatic experience of life is the agonizing violence of birth which thrusts eager infants into an uncompromisingly practical world. Parents and the immediate family are overwhelmed by this miracle of new life and nurture instant, unreasonable, emotional attachment which tends to obliterate objectivity. If they manage to recognize this perilous state of affairs, parents are usually bewildered by the demonstrated unconcern of practically everyone outside the family circle.

So it has been with THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. Brief congratulatory greetings arrived from scattered well-wishers who heard of the birth but almost none of them included a three dollar subscription check to help pay the milk bill. Potential contributors sent in more than 2,000 greetings in the form of manuscripts which they hoped we could publish; only six of these would-be contributors subscribed. On its first birthday, the parents of NAR view it quizzically and conclude it is a typical one-year-old; alive, demanding of time and energy, and still not paying its own keep.

A public audit would seem permissible.

Unquestionably, the greatest asset and the greatest debit THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW possesses is its parents' sheer ignorance. Most certainly, more knowledge and less passion would have aborted NAR's birth. Simultaneously, our conglomerate ignorance of the magazine publishing world has enabled us to accomplish some ends which wiser, more experienced heads would never have attempted in the first place.

The name itself, THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, is our most valuable tangible. It is a name to be reckoned with. An aura of nostalgic memories, and the imposing grandeur of all-encompassing authority must generate chills and fevers of patriotic alchemy. At the same time, many people must dismiss us with a disdainful equivalent of "Presumptuous ignorance! Can they actually believe they're the Voice of America?" Of course, we do not. But we do believe we can be *a* voice of America. Sometimes tremulous or uncertain or seeming to talk out of both sides of our mouth at once, the NAR pleads *nolo contendere*. How many year old infants know what they know and consistently announce it in a mellifluous, authoritative baritone?

Some things we *do* know: we live an economic life; if every manuscript received were accompanied by a $3.00 check for a subscription, NAR would be sitting in the catbird seat; being an editor frequently means taking a good idea presented in manhandled prose and literally re-writing it to make it publishable; returns on direct mail advertising for NAR do not pay the postage on the flyers; contents of any given issue do not reflect exactly what the staff had in mind until press time forced decisive compromise. We also know that magazines live and grow on advertising. It is necessary to underwrite the loss on newsstand sales, to pay contributors what we would like to pay, to pay salaries (if any of us had a salary). Advertisers are attracted by the number of paid subscribers. Campaigns to get advertisers ought to be financed out of income from advertising. Subscribers are essential to get advertising, but

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

advertisers indicate no interest until the subscribers are already in the fold. Subscribers, advertisers, subscribers . . . merry-go-round, squirrel cage tread mill. . . .

Some other conclusions are taking shape more slowly. To be labeled, as NAR has been, "Little," "Literary," or "College" is courting defeat in the struggle for commercial break-even points. We consider NAR *a small magazine of general interest*. We do not willfully publish anything to appeal only to some esoteric interest.

To be a quarterly is a hurdle of Himalayan height. To appear only four times a year is far too seldom to hope to establish a reading habit; so, should we publish six times a year with an ultimate goal of attaining monthly status? Would this attract more subscriptions? More advertisers?

We know we are becoming more adept at spotting a decent manuscript. We are justly proud of much of NAR's content and of the authors whose works we have used. The number of NAR authors during this first year who have had books published is impressive:

David Ignatow, *Figures of the Human,* Wesleyan U. Press, $4.00, 1964.
James B. Hall, *Us He Devours,* New Directions, $4.50, Dec., 1964.
James Dickey, *The Suspect in Poetry,*. . . . . .
William Debbins, editor, *Essays in The Philosophy of History,* U. of Texas Press, $5.00, Jan., 1965.
Richard W. Van Fossen, editor, *The Jew of Malta,* U. of Neb. Press, $3.00, Jan., 1965.
C. Merton Babcock, *The American Frontier,* Holt, $6.00, March 18, 1965.
William Murray, *Michael Joe,* Appleton-Century $5.95, March, 1965.
Willard Marsh, *Week With No Friday,* Harper and Row, $4.95, April 21, 1965.
Robert Penn Warren, *Who Speaks For the Negro?,* Harper and Row, $5.95, Apr., 1965.
Robert P. Dana, *The Dark Flags of Waking,* Qara Press, .75, Dec., 1964.
Isaac Asimov, Five titles in various imprints and editions, Feb.-May, 1965.
Sir Julian Huxley, *Charles Darwin and His World,* Viking, $6.50, Feb., 1965.
Karl Shapiro, *Prosody Handbook,* Harper and Row, $4.95, March 10, 1965.
Eli Siegel, Four titles in January and February, 1965.

These are books which have come to our attention, and we regret any omissions.

We are proud of the authors whose work in NAR was their first appearance in print. We rightly expect a number of these young writers to become recognized and hope they get rich along with it. We expect to continue the search for young talent and hope to recognize it when it comes our way.

Typical prejudiced parents on an offspring's first birthday, by design we would not go through this pain again; nevertheless, we love the demanding progeny and expect it to grow up to be President.

BER

A NEW DAY

The headlights fading out at dawn,
A stranger at the shore, the shore
Not wakening to the great sea
Out of sleep, and night, and no sun
Rising where it rose before.

The old champion in a sweat suit
Tells me this is Chicago, this —
He does not say — is not the sea
But the chopped grey lake you get to
After travelling all night

From Dubuque, Cairo, or Wyandotte.
He takes off at a slow trot,
And the fat slides under his shirt.
I recall the Friday night
In a beer garden in Detroit

I saw him flatten Ezzard Charles
On TV, and weep, and raise
Both gloved hands in a slow salute
To a God. I could tell him that.
I could tell him that those good days

Were no more and no less than these.
I could tell him that I thought
By now I must have reached the sea
We read about, or that last night
I saw a man break down and cry

Out of luck and out of gas
In Bruce's Crossing. We collect
Here at the shore, the two of us,
To make a pact, a people come
For a new world and a new home,

And what we get is what we bring:
A grey light coming on at dawn,
No fresh start and no bird song
And no sea and no shore
That someone hasn't seen before.

Philip Levine

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GOD AND HIS CLASSMATES

The Supreme Court decision that has accented the separation of church and state in our public schools has brought with it some disquieting conclusions that as a result our children will be given an irreligious education. Concern has been expressed that a godless generation is sponsored in our schools.

Such fears will be allayed by a reminder of the many non-sectarian religious experiences that are — or can be — part of the still standard high school course of study. They are evident in the study of literature in the English classes: the plea for faith in God in the testament of Coleridge's ancient mariner; the intimations of immortality in Wordsworth's Ode (". . . trailing clouds of glory do we come/ From God, who is our home").

The students read Browning's reassurance that "God's in His Heaven"; the blind Milton's challenge, "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?" and his reply, "Who best/ Bear his mild yoke, they serve Him best." They read Shakespeare's tribute through Portia to the quality of mercy as "an attribute to God Himself."

They are not likely, as has been deplored, to become atheists by default because, allegedly, "God is banished from the classroom." *Silas Marner* is mainly the story of how a man lost faith in God and how he regained that faith. *A Tale of Two Cities* concludes with the affirmation of Sidney Carton as he steps to the guillotine ("I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord . . ."); *Ivanhoe* is in part the tale of Rebecca's trial, and her strength through her firm belief in her God. The Old Testament itself is part of the English course in many high schools. The students learn the story of Joseph, of Ruth, of Job, of David, as part of their literary and spiritual heritage.

Formal religious lessons can hardly improve upon some that are incidentally given in the English classes. Can there be a more profoundly reverent discussion in a classroom than is invoked by Tennyson's "God fulfills Himself in many ways,/ Lest one good custom should corrupt the world"; or by Emily Dickinson's "I never spoke with God,/ Nor visited in heaven . . ."; or by Kipling's "Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet"; or by Meredith's "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer has been answered"?

Other subjects taught in high school contribute to a religious awareness of the students. The pages of their history of the United States give repeated testimony: ". . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights . . ."; ". . . the station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them . . ."; ". . . with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right . . ."; "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom . . ."; "In God is our trust." The ideals of the Catholic monastery, of the Reformation, of Islam, of Israel, are part of the study of history.

The science teacher, unfolding the dramatic chart of atomic weights of the elements, or revealing the universe of electrons, protons, neutrons, can lead his students to find therein, as Einstein intimated, the demonstration of a Divine presiding intelligence. Especially so the biology teacher, whose subject is not merely the structure of cells, spores, genes, but — therein implied — the manifest order of all living creation.

Many high school students have the opportunity to experience the exaltation of religious music. They are the fortunate ones who take part in the singing of *The Messiah,* Haydn's *Creation,* Mendelssohn's *Elijah,* or a Bach cantata, or even a chorus of the B Minor Mass, or the "Sabbath Morning Service" of Ernest Bloch. (There is no sectarianism in music. "There is one music," said Debussy.)

"Music should have no other aim," Bach declared, "than the glory of God and the recreation of the soul." That may be said too for much of the devotional art through the ages, from Giotto and the Renaissance painters to the visions of Rouault and the last designs by Matisse. Even in reproduction, such as is now widely available, an exalting picture can, proverbially, accomplish more than a thousand words.

The Supreme Court decision, instead of bringing dismay, should point up the responsibility of our schools for non-sectarian religious teaching. The high school course of study gives the dedicated teacher many opportunities to stress this vital aspect of a student's education.

Benjamin M. Steigman
New York, New York

THIS STORY

This story has been in the making for four long and arduous years. It was in the bleak December, as I remember, that a friendly psychiatrist convinced me I would have *learn* to write, that I would get nowhere just putting my feelings into words (not to mention my philosophy), though it was good therapy, he conceded. Well here I am, five dropped short-story correspondence courses, one hundred writer's magazines and fifty-two instruction books later, ready to write the BIG ONE.

This story not only represents the product of a long and sincere study of writing techniques, but it is imbued with the wisdom of the ages for I have dipped deep into philosophy—or as deep as a mind with the concentration span of a five year old child can. This

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

story is sure to please the critics for I have not neglected to read volumes of literary criticism — or as many as I could carry home from the library in the snow. (That's a lie.) My previous works have been tried out on my friends and they all say I'm ready. (That's a lie too, but it sounded so saterical I had to put it in. Actually, my friends agree I need to wait and work more. But I am tired of waiting, and work never did appeal to me.) That was not the place to end the parenthesis but I know of no easy way to get out of them. That is my problem: I get into something and don't know how to get out — except by just quitting.

If all that I have read about writing has taught me anything — and, I might add, I consider myself an amateur-expert on How to Write — it has taught me that I have none of the requirements. That statement is neither a boast of proud rebellion nor an apology. Let me enumerate: I am not willing to learn, but even if I were I have not the concentration to listen to what I should hear. (But I said that.) I have not read very much fiction. I don't like it. It's a waste of time. I've always been prejudiced against fiction. The word was tantamount to LIE. And I saw no reason for telling a lie — no matter how colorful.

Why is it only "good" stuff is published, never crap like this? I think it is because only "good" stuff can be *attacked*. We are all full of envy and mallace. We only appreciate that which is *so* good that we can not fight it. We submit to it, let it overpower us. If it is less than great, we sneer at it. Even if it is superior to our own efforts, we are able to find "fatal flaws". If parise it we must we do so in a condescending manner, "Well, his style is nice." But a piece of garbage like this — what can you say about it? It is so bad you wouldn't bother even saying so. A Freshman English teacher would have a field day with it (or give up after two sentences).

I have studied the "markets" thoroughly and conclude there is no place for the truely mediocre. Even the pulps have rigid requirements. As do the juvenile, detective, trade and house organ publications. They all want something definite. And they definitely don't want me. I admit I haven't really tried them all. I am not the author who has enough rejection slips to paper a room. I gave up three years ago when my greeting card verse came back.

So you're asking why I don't give up now. Well I am. This is merely my announcement of departure. I'm bitter and I want you all to know that an insensitive society has denied a potentially great artist his due share. I could tell you great things. But now I wont. You have mistreated me. You insist I use a formula. Or if not a formula, then some dainty style that will be good enough to please you into thinking you could do better. In any case you want me to use concrete images; not literal abstract language like this. I could even get away with this if I were witty about it. But hell, I don't want to. All I want is for that sweet, lovely young girl down the street whom I've been eying, to come up here and wrap her legs around me. It would sure beat this insane pecking on the typewriter. (No vulgar pun intended. I'M not that insane: I *know* you wouldn't go for that.) So you see, I'm trying to please you after all. A slip of the parenthesis and it all came out.

J. T. Locke
Chattanooga, Tenn.

PIE FOR BREAKFAST

Several weeks ago a friend of mine invited me down for the week-end, and his wife thoughtfully wrote to ask if I had any peculiar eating habits. So I wrote back and said I was an easy-going fellow who would eat anything, but if she really wanted to spoil me, "I preferred pie for breakfast."

Well, by return mail, air mail, special delivery, with 8¢ postage due, I received seven, single-spaced, typewritten pages on the dangers of indulging in excessive carbohydrates. Three days later, a buxom woman knocked on my door and announced she was from OverEaters Anonymous and some "anonymous friend" had asked her to call on me.

Since she looked as if she demanded it, I invited her in, and as I stepped back, I unfortunately stumbled over the rug and wobbled upright as I am likely to do whenever I think someone suspects me of overindulgence. This confirmed her worst fears. So feeling decidedly flustered and uncontrollably guilty, I explained to her that I really wasn't interested in joining the O.E.A., and that I actually didn't eat pie for breakfast, except on state occasions.

I don't think she believed me; for I know she eyed me suspiciously, and if I'm not mistaken, she took a surreptitious sniff at my breath. But she left anyway, three hours later. I know, too, after her departure, I eyed myself in the bathroom mirror, and I looked several pounds heavier.

When I finally went down to see my friend, I decided to play what I thought was a mildly amusing joke. I took along my portable, camp-out refrigerator and stocked it with a dozen frozen pies. The joke was received with the hilarity of a post mortem. By now my friends were truly alarmed. Nothing would do but that I had to sit through two lectures on carbohydrates delivered by a reformed foodoholic. As nearly as I can understand it, the foodoholic is like the alcoholic, only his obsession is food, fattening food, *pie*, for instance. One sniff, one bite, and he's off.

Now, I'm a mild-mannered fellow, and normally I try to take a tolerant attitude toward another man's intolerance. But I'm afraid our society is in danger of losing one of its more precious freedoms. Several years ago this same friend decided to join a church with which I was not entirely sympathetic. I allowed him to join that church. I'll admit I was not happy about it, but it wouldn't have occurred to me to interfere with his freedom to choose his own religion. Well, that's not entirely true. It did occur to me. But I would not have dreamed of doing it, nor would he have dreamed

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of my doing it. Interfering with another man's religious faith simply is not done; the Constitution is quite clear on that point.

Unhappily, preferring pie for breakfast is not my only abnormality. I also like to sleep late. I don't sleep any longer than a man who falls asleep at ten p.m. and wakes up at seven a.m. It's just that I prefer a different slice of the day. But I have yet to meet an early riser who could accept this with equanimity. I can sympathize with his desire to rise at some ridiculous, ghastly hour, provided he is reasonbly quiet about it. I don't even object to his having cornered the market on worms. But I have yet to figure out why my sleeping bothers him. Somehow he is scandalized by it. You might say, outraged! It's as if I were undermining the country, destroying morale, or something. When truthfully, my own morale is a good deal higher when I do sleep in.

One time a fellow told me I didn't know what I was missing. *I know* what I am missing. I have stayed up, and I have gotten up, and personally, I like the dawn better at the tail end of the day.

The other evening my wife and a friend of hers were watching a late interview show on TV. The guest was Joan Crawford. I looked up from my book and remarked what attractive legs Miss Crawford had. "You don't see small feet like that on women much any more," I said.

"Don't be ridiculous," my wife said. "It's the *shoes* she's wearing."

The two women grew quite heated about Miss Crawford's daring to be different and succeeding so attractively. So to restore the peace, I said, "Well, why don't *you* buy a pair of shoes like Miss Crawford's wearing? Why do you wear those pointed toes if they make your feet look big and awkward?"

"Oh, my," my wife said hopelessly. "*Because* looking awkward is the *fashion* this year."

Perhaps psychologists have been placing too much stress on normality. What is normality, but conformity? Often one man's eccentricity is nothing more than another man's prejudice. But the stress on normality has made everybody scared to death to break from the herd.

Oh, I'm well aware that according to Mrs. Grundy the greatest sin on earth is non-conformity. But I like to remember the magnificent old apple tree that grew on the front of the property where we used to live. This grand old eccentric bore ripe red apples, hanging side by side with apple blossoms. Everybody tells me this is impossible, that no self-respecting apple tree would do such a thing. Well, my magnificent, old non-conformer did. And no one ever accused it of being neurotic or abnormal.

Several years ago a well-known lecturer was asked to speak at a nudist camp. At the gate, he was greeted by a committee of ladies and gentlemen attired solely in sun tan. They suggested that he would probably like to rest before dinner, and he went upstairs in a panic. He shut the door, placed a chair against it, and paced the floor. Should he or should he not conform?

The dinner bell rang, and with the courage of desperation, he stripped, and in stark splendor descended the stairs. There he saw, that to do him honor, all the guests had put on evening clothes!

I can think of no more stringent warning against the dangers of conformity. And I think it's high time we guaranteed the individual, any individual, even the *other* fellow, *not* three freedoms, but *four*: 1. Freedom of Speech, 2. Freedom of Religion, 3. Freedom of Politics, and 4. *Freedom for* his *Pet Eccentricities*.

E. F. Wells
San Diego, California

PRAYER AND PRESIDENT STARBORG

After my convocation speech on "Mark Twain and Frontier Humor," I was not surprised to get a note from President Starborg of Cooke College, a modest Methodist college in the Midwest where I had been more or less happily teaching for three years. Since his appointment the previous year, President Starborg had called conferences with many faculty members; I had had several with him myself relating to various affairs of the English Department, of which I was acting chairman.

My convocation speech had been well received. The students were enthusiastic, commenting that it was a relief from the usual sermon. Dr. Templar, the chairman of the religion department and something of a conservative, had gone so far as to tell me that there was no reason for Cooke College to look outside its own faculty for stimulating lectures if we could have speeches like the one I had given. Naturally, I thought that Dr. Starborg wanted to add to the general chorus of acclaim.

So I waited for the meeting without the familiar forebodings of doom which I often have when I'm called to a president or dean's office. In our past conferences to discuss the future of the Cooke English Department, Dr. Starborg impressed upon me the necessity for me to complete my Ph.D. at the local state university (I had a thesis left to finish) because he feels very strongly that it was absolutely necessary for Cooke to have a Ph.D. as chairman of the English Department. Perhaps he would realize after hearing my convocation speech and after what the students and members of the faculty had been saying about it that I was a good teacher and a valuable asset at Cooke, even if it looked like it would be a few more years before I would complete my doctoral thesis, if, indeed, I ever did.

When I walked into his office, it was a pleasant morning in April, the sun was shining, the leaves of the maple trees were just beginning to bud, and it looked like a good day to play a set of tennis. He invited me in with what I thought was, even for him, undue solemnity. Dr. Starborg weighed about 225 pounds, and was not quite six feet tall and always gave the impression of having trouble lifting his feet when he walked. He padded back behind his large desk and sat down. As I waited, I looked at his clean desk, wondering

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where college presidents hide their unfinished work, for the evidence of it is never visible on their desks. I could hear the footsteps of students walking hurriedly across the campus. I was startled to hear Dr. Starborg say, "Let us bow for a word of prayer," but he had folded his short, stubby fingers, bowed his head, knitted his brow, and was indeed in a posture of prayer. I wanted to say, "O, come off of it Dr. Starborg," but he started ahead of me, and I, too, bowed my head, folded my hands, and . . . noticed that my fingernails were dirty. I had come quite unprepared for a prayer meeting.

I haven't the faintest idea what most of the details of President Starborg's prayer were, and I've never been able to recall even one phrase, but they weren't important. It was easy enough to sense the general drift of the prayer. It didn't take me long to discover, after he had gotten through the little pleasantries with which he greeted the Lord, that I was, indeed, the main subject of the prayer.

It seemed that I had offended the Lord by my convocation speech. I wasn't sure whether the Lord had taken umbrage, but it was now obvious that Dr. Starborg had taken offense. In the low confidential tone which he reserved for prayer, Dr. Starborg implored God to forgive me for taking his name in vain. He made it clear also that I had in no way represented the tone of Cooke College in my address and that he was afraid that I had besmirched the good image of Cooke College where most faculty and students were striving to go on to perfection. This request for forgiveness wasn't clear to me. I didn't understand how the Lord could have taken offense at what I had said until I remembered that on a dare from a colleague, I had read Mark Twain's letter to the gas company during the convocation speech. You remember how it goes: "Some day you will move me almost to the verge of irritation by your chuckle-headed Goddamned fashion of shutting your Goddamned gas off without any notice to your Goddamned parishioners, etc." It didn't take excessive reflection to see why prexy was interpreting that letter as having same measure of irreverence in it. But while I could see that Mark Twain might have been irreverent, I didn't notice that Dr. Starborg was praying for Mark Twain but for me. I resented it. Then it occurred to me that I had added as an aside that it was apparent, except for a few isolated small-town mechanics and perhaps others with whom I was not acquainted, not many people today knew the fine art of swearing and that even Mark Twain for all his skill had to depend upon repetition for effect and that what we needed were some new swear words to give us some variety. I had gone on to tell about Bobby, a young grocer in the small Oklahoma town where I grew up, who was an expert and who had once been reprimanded by one of the saintly people in the community. Bobby listened to the admonition quietly and then ended the discussion once and for all by remarking, "The Good Lord knows that I don't mean it when I swear any more than you do when you pray."

But I've left Dr. Starborg praying. I couldn't get over the notion that I ought not to be listening, and I kept hearing the sparrows in the shrubs just outside the window. In presenting my case to the Lord for consideration, he was in fact judging it. He wasn't even waiting for the Lord to answer his prayer and tell him what to do about me; the president was telling God what I ought to do, and I was getting the word by listening in. Though I knew I should keep my head bowed, I couldn't keep my eyes off those stubby fingers and the big Masonic ring he was wearing. Whenever he made a particularly telling point, he would raise the middle finger slightly. He began by telling God what a "great guy" I was. I don't believe these were his exact words; but he quickly added that I would do better somewhere other than Cooke, somewhere where my talents for upsetting the piety of the students wouldn't be so disturbing. He went on to demand that God make his plans for me to go back next year to graduate school and finish my degree absolutely clear to me. It was astonishing how well he knew God's mind. I still had some doubts about what God wanted me to do, but I was clear about what Dr. Starborg expected me to do. While he wasn't exactly telling God that he was going to fire me, he did pray to God to help me see above all else the necessity of resigning.

Because he had rather stacked the cards, of course, his prayer was answered.

There is another part of the conversation that I remember. Starborg commented on a sermon I had preached on layman's Sunday at the First Methodist Church the preceding year, calling it impious. The sermon, as I had made quite clear, was based on one preached by John Wesley at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin at Oxford on August 24, 1744. Wesley described the world that would logically result from the spread of Christianity, a world in which righteousness and justice, mercy and peace are the rule, and he charged that it was not only the sinners who kept that world from coming into being but the saints, especially those sitting in the pews that Sunday morning. Wesley's sermon didn't go over too well with his audience. He was never asked again to take his turn in the pulpit at St. Mary's. Neither had my sermon gone over very well, at least with Dr. Starborg. For I, too, had suggested that the Christians of First Church might be responsible for the wretched state of affairs in our time. At least we couldn't blame all of our problems on the sinners. I may have been more forceful and decisive about it; you know how one is afraid of understatement in preaching. I was afraid the congregation might miss the obvious point and smothered them with more force than necessary. Like Mark Twain in his letter to the gas company.

But I couldn't see Dr. Starborg's objection to a sermon stolen from John Wesley and brought up-to-date. Dr. Starborg was an ordained preacher of the church of John Wesley, and he had surely read Wesley's sermons including the one I used, and I'm sure that he had heard them praised in seminary. But now that I've had some chance to think about it it doesn't seem unusual at all.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Any president of a college who holds that the American economic system as interpreted by the Republican party is the closest approximation of the Kingdom of God that man can devise would be offended by a proposal to reorganize that society in order to provide more righteousness, justice, and mercy, especially for the poor.

After a parting word to the effect that he was concerned with my best interests, Dr. Starborg dismissed me, and somehow I managed to get out of his office. I've had more than a little time to think about the incident. Sometimes I still become angry with the president, but mostly it's a source of pride. Not everyone has the honor of being asked in a prayer to resign.

But what really galls me was that I had not had enough presence of mind to demand equal time with the Lord, to say when the president finished, "Hold on, Dr. Starborg, while you've got God on the line, let me talk to him. Don't be too sure that you interpreted God's answer correctly until I've presented my case."

Should I have prayed: "Look, God" (it's hard enough to know how to address God either in private prayer or public prayer and in this situation, which seemed to be neither, the conventions for addressing God are not well established), "you have heard from him; now I think you ought to hear from me. He isn't giving you all the facts because he doesn't know them all. And he isn't interpreting the facts objectively. There is considerable evidence that he is prejudiced. Let me straighten you and him out." I was usually more than half asleep when I would try to work out this prayer, and, in spite of the fact that I'm an English teacher, I could never straighten out my pronoun references in that prayer, and I was worried that the ambiguities in reference might confuse God and President Starborg.

More often my hypothetical prayer would take a different direction. "Almighty God, the man who just did you the favor of telling you what your will for me is (more pronoun reference difficulty, but I think it's fairly clear if you'll think about it a little), is an ass, an idiot, and a damn fool." Aside from showing further impiety on my part, I doubt that such a prayer would have been very valuable, for unless I underestimate God considerably, he already knew that and Dr. Starborg would not have been convinced.

So it was undoubtedly just as well that I didn't insist on equal time. It could only have created additional problems for me, for President Starborg, and for God, who was having his own peculiar difficulties at the time because the Russians had just orbited a sputnik, and outer space, in which God had been unmolested since the beginning of time, was in danger of falling into man's hands; I could understand that such a prospect must give God pause. In fact, I've never discussed the incident of President Starborg's prayer with God. I was embarrassed by the incident — and I've always felt that God must have been.

Elmer F. Suderman
Richmond, Indiana

LETTERS NEVER MAILED DEPARTMENT

Arkansaw, Wisconsin
January 21, 1965

Mr. Carl McCafferty
Principal
Tulsa Central High School
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. McCafferty:

How distressing to read that you have excluded John Stanley from Tulsa Central High School because he wears a Beatle-style haircut.

How regrettable that you have joined the school board in Westbrook, Connecticut, and dozens of other school officials from coast-to-coast and border-to-border in their efforts to claim the title of Hairstylist To Youth. Must each school board now sprout a Committee on Hair? Is it possible to dictate style from the teacher's desk? Is that the ultimate goal of those who follow the calling of Teacher? Will certification of graduation from an accredited Barber College join other Methods Courses required for teacher certification?

It is sad that neither Albert Einstein nor Albert Schweitzer could have attended Tulsa Central High School. Along with these two luminaries, almost all male students in America prior to 1930 would have been locked from their classrooms had your regulation prevailed in their times. Browse through the collection of Tulsa schools' old yearbooks for hair-raising proof of this.

Is it possible that this bothersome hair problem is symptomatic of something far more ominous simmering in our classrooms? Could it be that the way they comb their hair is one of the few trivial decisions our children have been able to retain, and so it looms large to them?

I submit that this is the first nationwide evidence of rebellion against the total conformity demanded from society in general and in the schoolroom in particular.

Take no false consolation from the resolution of praise bestowed upon you by the Student Council of Central High. Student governments exist to reflect the opinions of faculties and administrators they serve. Student governments are training camps for the future holders of your jobs. To publicize a student council pronunciamento . . . really!

Hair is evidence that our children have tried us again and again have found us wanting. The John Stanleys must be crew cut. How many elderly women teachers with their grotesque blue hair have been suspended this year? Bizarre appearance is not only condoned in adults, but to attain it women have erected one of the truly horrifying aspects of our culture — the cosmetics colossus.

Hair again, our children are tearing at the tissues of our lies.

Did not Delilah set the precedent when she trimmed Samson's locks and sapped his strength? As in so many

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other instances, I fear that educators cannot see the heads for the hairsplitting.

Sincerely,
DIOGENES JONES

UNREQUIRED READING

Contraception has been finally recognized by Washington; however, procrastination encouraged the impacted areas from the population explosion to become so massive (I use the word willfully) that the only solution may be worldwide consumption of a pill capable of producing a decade of retroactive birth control.

On page 19 of the fall issue of the University of Chicago house organ called *Chicago Today*, there appears an interesting article by R. E. Streeter, Dean of the Division of Humanities, "The Day They Turned The Libraries Into Parking Lots," which I interpret to be a protest against mechanization and automation.

On page 28 of the same issue, it is proudly recorded that Don R. Swanson, *Physicist,* was appointed Dean of the Graduate Library School.

If I could only afford it, I would buy my friends subscriptions to a couple of reputable medical journals I've seen recently. Coffee tables everywhere would be enlivened by an attractive display of copies of the current issues of magazines entitled simply *Blood* and *Guts*.

SERGEANT AARON GREEN

He is an awkward pattern of legs,
And arms, surrealistic, gawkish,
Amid the abattoir grasses.
Two eyes, promiscuous among the dregs,
Stare, a fixed stare, mawkish,
Unaware of the pastel haze, the gases,
Which partially obscure Aaron Green
After his encounter with the Machine.
Aaron Green has come undone,
From being himself,
An intact unit,
One.
Because he lacked a first class body job,
His way neither armored nor indestructible,
Because he had a brain instead of an iron epidermis
And two machine gun turrets on his dome,
Because God, Who made Aaron Green,
Had an antiquated assembly line
With no provision for the addition
Of the latest protected patents.

POSSESSION

They thought they could go back
to find the same marked squirrels
nesting in the walnut trees
and that there would be some work
to do, something useful
and hard, and that they might please

their own need to be doing.
You know what they found? They found
themselves standing in your yard
awed by the gladiolus
and the absence of something
they knew. This had been free land,

they said,
but now it was yours
who went in to call the law.

Philip Levine

The index to *The Encyclopedia of American Associations* lists thousands of organizations with which most of us are familiar and of which, in total, uncounted millions of us are dedicated members; for example,

The National Tufted Bedspread Association
The Dotted Line Club
The Hundred Million Club
The American Association For the Advancement of Atheism
The National Soap Sculpture Association
The Blizzard Club
Dysautonomia Association
The All-Bound Box Association

These are mere samples of the thousands of straightforward titles which even the uninitiated can comprehend at a glance. Such a ninny as myself can grasp the need for and the purpose of The National Soap Sculpture Association.

But who can explain the purpose of such as these without making use of *The Encyclopedia of American Associations*?

American Fracture Association
The National T. T. T. Society
Aztec Club of 1847
International Concatenated Order of Hoo Hoo.

In just a few minutes I was able to identify another whole grouping with unlimited possibilities for development as a parlor game by merely asking participants to assign appropriate explanations of what they think the title represents.

World Tape Pals (an excuse to have a new Diet of Worms)
Ancient Order Bagmen of Bagdad (retired Persian mathematicians)
National Vaudeville Artists (an affliation of apparitions presided over by Harry Houdini)
The American Primrose Society (a bunch of walkers)
Minute Women of The USA (dehydrated instant wives)
Liquid Tight Paper Container Corporation (sewers for drunken paper)

This year I would like to be invited to attend a joint convention of the International Chef's Association and the Beer Institute of America.

BER

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hang down your head, Tom Dooley;
Hang down your head and cry;
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley;
Poor boy, he's bound to die.

Folk Song, Traditional

Tom Dooley or St. Thomas á Do?

Bruce Drake

He was a brash young man. That's the way he struck all of us at the time, and I can't remember any of us revising our opinion as we got to know him.

I first met him in Indo China in 1954. Our group had been assigned to control the evacuation of the Vietnamese to Saigon. It was a dirty job — even for a force that usually handled dirty jobs. As Beachmasters, we were the ones who went in on early waves of amphibious landings, set up communications, and controlled the calling in of troops, equipment, and supplies as they were needed. So it was logical for us to be chosen to control the loading of refugees and French military personnel and equipment. But unlike any of the areas where we had landed. this seemed the hottest, dirtiest, poorest place on earth.

I suppose we had plenty of reasons to be jealous of him right from the beginning. In contrast to our rotting, stinking, sweat-stained green fatigues, he wore the crisp, starched, white uniform of a Lieutenant (junior grade) in the Medical Corps. He cut quite a figure, saluting and shaking hands with the similarly clad, high-ranking French military observers while we herded the Vietnamese refugees like cattle through our debarkation pens, dusting them with DDT powder.

Because of the French truce agreement with the communists, the American forces weren't allowed to stay ashore overnight. So we slept aboard hot, crowded LST's which served alternately as floating dormitories for us and refugee carriers on the Saigon run. But somehow he managed to get around the red tape. He lived in a plush hotel in Haiphong, had his own vehicle to get him around, and got a special per diem allowance to pay for his added expenses.

We wondered how he managed it. Most of the naval logistical support in the Far East at the time was going to the Seventh Fleet, which was providing a stalemating show of force at Quemoy and the Matsus. We were the lost battalion, inadequately fed, clothed, and quartered, actually suffering at times from malnutrition and loathsome skin diseases. Yet somehow he was able to requisition anything he needed.

We loved to beat him at poker. He was the perfect hard loser, protesting in his shrill voice with the slight lisp that he was being robbed, seemingly never realizing that he played abysmally badly.

His job was to set up staging camps for the refugees. As a doctor, he was to see to it that there was adequate shelter, water, food, and sanitary facilities for the people who hobbled in from all over Vietnam to catch the freedom ride to Saigon. As far as we could tell, he seemed to be doing a capable job; but we hated him with unanimity.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His name was Thomas Dooley.

A few months after the evacuation, I saw him again at the Officers' Club in Yokosuka, Japan. He told me about a book he'd written, called *Deliver Us From Evil,* and asked me to read the manuscript. I took it back to my quarters and went through it. When I brought it back to him, I was boiling with anger.

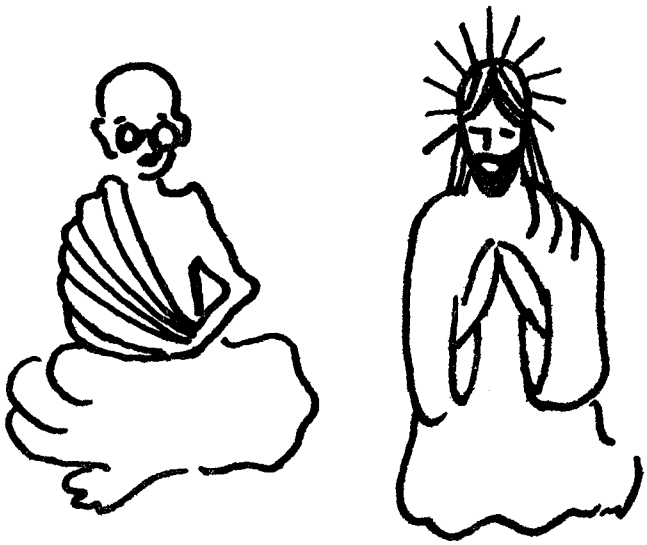
"Tom," I yelled, "what's the matter with you? How could you possibly write a book about the Vietnamese evacuation without once ever mentioning the Beachmasters? We were the whole show! You know as well as I do it couldn't have been done without us."

He smiled. "If there's a book in the Beachmasters," he said, "you're a writer — *you* write it."

He was right, and I knew it. Somehow, it didn't make it any easier to like him.

We heard he went back to Indo China. Little by little, word trickled back that he was in Laos — not as a navy doctor this time, but on his own hook, financed partly by the royalties of his book and partly by the donations of American pharmaceutical houses.

I'd been out of the navy a couple of years when I heard Tom Dooley would be presented with a special humanitarianism award on television. As I waited to see the show, I wondered if he had changed. I was disappointed to find he hadn't.



During the program, and on subsequent television appearances, he was the same outspoken individualist we had known. He sounded curt, often impatient, and at all times aware of himself. He still referred to himself in the third person: instead of saying, "They told me it couldn't be done," he'd say, "They told Dooley it couldn't be done, but Dooley went right ahead and did it." We'd always found this characteristic his most astonishing display of egocentricity.

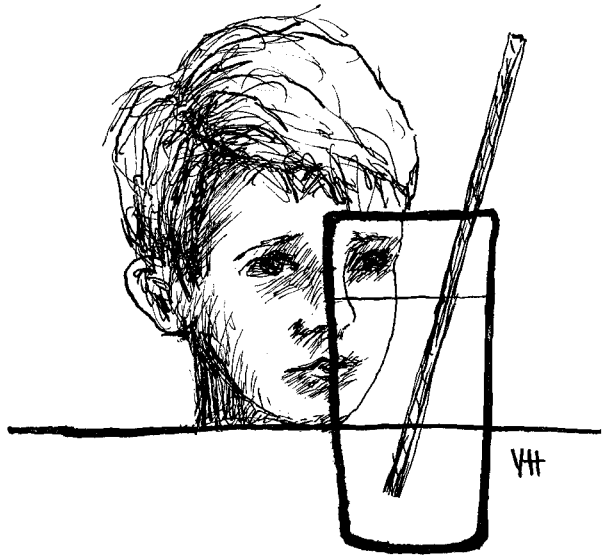
When Tom Dooley died a few years ago, I still didn't know what to make of him. To the world, he was highly revered as the martyr of Laos, founder and guiding light of MEDICO, author, philosopher, and humanitarian. Many saw him as another Schweitzer. Others called him a saint. Yet all I could remember was a self-centered, brash young man.

I wondered how often in the past greatness has been censured by imperfect impressions of an unusual personality. It would explain why Ghandi had his dissenters, why Joan of Arc was burned at the stake, why St. Peter was crucified upside down. It might even explain how the contemporaries of Christ could have known Him without believing in Him.

I may have been face to face with a living saint. But all I could see was a brash young man.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Low Blue Man



George A. Weaver

Just before Labor Day, when it was almost time for Oscar to be starting back to school again, mother told him that father would soon be paying him another visit. He was sitting in the sun parlor, reading a book, when mother told him.

"Your father's coming to see you tomorrow," mother said, wiping her wet hands on the dish towel. Oscar forgot all about the book, and looked at mother and said:

"It's not my birthday again until next year, and Christmas comes before that." Mother set her jaw in a way Oscar recognized, and looked at him for what seemed a long time before speaking. Something about father could always do that to her. Sometimes mother would have waited long enough before speaking, but sometimes, too, she didn't wait long enough, and so said things she didn't like Oscar to hear.

"Maybe he wants to make his big splash while he's still got something left to do it with," mother said. And Oscar saw that she was immediately sorry. As she did always at these times, she turned away from Oscar and went into the kitchen to be alone, where he heard her snap the dish towel loudly before folding it to hang up.

He understood *big splash*. What mother meant by *big splash* was like the time of brother Len's marriage. Father had come to make a big splash then, and Oscar had been the only one to see it besides brother Len and father himself. Brother Len was in the sun parlor at that time, showing father his new spinning reel, and Oscar had come silently to the kitchen doorway, where he'd been looking at an avocado seed he was growing in a glass of water, and he'd seen and heard it all.

Father said, "Lenny, boy, I had to get you something for your wedding, kid, and damned if I knew what, so I finally figured you could use a good pen." Father dipped his hand into his shirt pocket and gave brother Len a brand new Parker 51 fountain pen with a gold cap and his name stamped on the barrel in gold.

Brother Len smiled a little and kind of moved his shoulders, and said something like, "Dad . . . Hell, Dad . . .," turning the fountain pen over and over in his hands, looking down at it and squinting, and then looking up at father and smiling and shrugging. And at just the moment when Oscar was going to shout out loud that *he* knew father was fooling, just then, father laughed his big laugh and cracked brother one on the arm.

"I got you a little scratch paper too, boy," he said, handing a little brown book to brother. Brother Len looked in the book, and smiled some more, blinking.

"Well, I don't know what to say, Dad!" he said. Father laughed again, and cracked brother another good one, and then they shook hands like two people who loved each other.

Brother Dick came in from the front door just then, wearing his letter sweater from college, which he always wore when father came to visit, and he shouted, "Hi, Buck! Did you just get in?" to father, and father shook hands with him, and then Len showed Oscar and brother Dick the bank account book with two hundred and fifty dollars in it that father had given him.

"Say," father said to brother Dick, "did I tell you I'm turning you pro now?" Then he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

explained to them all how he would pay brother Dick one dollar for every point he made next basketball season, and Dick should just send him the box scores from the newspaper, and he'd send a check right along — if brother Dick didn't have anything against New York banks, that is. They all laughed hard some more, and father got a little bottle of something special a New York friend had brought from Canada for him, and he made three drinks, explaining that water only ruined it.

"Now, my littlest guy," he said to Oscar, "you take this and just hike yourself to the drug store and get a sodey or some peanuts or something you like," patting Oscar on the hinder and heading him toward the front hall door. As he went out, Oscar heard father say, "He's the littlest dickens," and he and Len and Dick laughed again. He didn't look at his hand until he was out of the house, so Oscar was terribly surprised to find it was *five* dollars, and not just one.

That was how father made a big splash. Perhaps he was coming this time to make up for not coming for Oscar's last birthday. Nobody mentioned it at the time, but Oscar knew he should have been there, so he asked his mother why father hadn't come.

"I'm sure I couldn't say," mother said to him.

"He's probably not flush enough," sister Rose said. She was married too, and lived nearby, so she came to the house often to see mother.

"The least he could do is send him a quarter card . . . or even write him a letter!" mother said. Then she set her jaw and went out of the living room, and Oscar was left alone with sister, who was staring straight ahead with her eyebrows raised, and the smoke from her cigarette going right up over her head.

Oscar knelt on the couch and watched for father's long Chrysler from the front window. Sister Rose was with him, to be there when father came on purpose, since of course, mother had gone into her bedroom and locked the door about an hour before, as she always did before father came for a visit.

She had wiped Oscar's face with a washrag one last time, and said to sister, "Rose, keep him clean, will you?" And then she had said to Oscar, "Behave your father, Oscar." He said he would — he always behaved when father came, and mother sucked her cheek and said, "You've had everything . . . and you've had nothing," before she set her jaw and went into her room. The lock on the door snapped loudly, and Oscar went into the living room to wait with sister, hoping father would be flush this time to make up for the last birthday.

He didn't recognize the car at first, because it turned out that father had a new one. "I just throw 'em on the scrap heap when they get used up, sonny boy," he told him.

When Oscar opened the front door for him, father picked him up and scratched his face with his moustache, and squeezed his ribs, saying, "How's my littlest guy? You been a good boy? You all set to go back to school, are you? By golly though, you don't look like you've grown a mite though . . . do you clean your plate up good?"

"New car?" sister asked him when he set Oscar back down.

"Oh sure," father said, "got to keep up appearances."

"Paid for?" sister asked. Father, with a look very much like mother's, didn't answer her. "Are you in a condition to drive it?" sister asked then, her eyebrows raised.

"That's no way to talk in front of him, Rose," father said, "little pitchers —" Oscar knew: they have big ears. When he complained of having big ears, mother always told him he'd grow up to them.

"Where are you taking him today?" sister asked.

"Out to buy him some school things!" father said loudly, "It's okay if the boy's father buys him a few things, isn't it!" Oscar, standing between them, could have reached out and touched them both on the belly button at the same time. He bet mother could hear in the bedroom, it was so loud.

"He hardly knew he had one on his birthday," sister said. Ever since brother Dick had left college and gone to New York to work for father, Rose talked about father with her eyebrows up. But if they were going out to buy school things, then father must be flush.

"Let's go, little man," father said, taking his hand with the two brown fingers from smoking. He saw father had a new ring.

"Get him home by six for supper, please,"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sister said, "and tell Dick he might try writing to his mother once in a while."

Sitting in the new Chrysler, Oscar held his feet straight out until father put his hand on his knees and said, "Don't. You'll get marks all over the dash, boy." He couldn't think of anything to say just then, so he just sat and looked at the decorations in the new car. There was a coat of arms on every door, on the dash, and on the steering wheel, and father said that whenever it got hot, he could just turn on an air conditioner.

"Do you miss your brother Dick?" father asked him. When he said yes, he did, father said, "Well he lives with me in New York, you know, he works right for me now. I bet you'd like that!" Father didn't say anything more for a while, and Oscar tried, but he couldn't think of anything, until finally he remembered.

"I had a birthday," he said.

"Yes, I know," father said, and then he smoked a couple of times, and just when Oscar was about to ask him when they were going to buy the school things, father stopped the car and said, "Let's stop in here for a minute." They got out, and Oscar took hold of father's two brown smoking fingers, and father looked down from way up and said, "Hang on tight — can't have you getting hurt," as they crossed the busy street and went into a tavern.

"Alley Oop!" father said, lifting him up on a stool. The man came and grinned at Oscar and winked. "Give us a schnappser," father said, "and how about some orange sodey for my boy."

Father had several schnappsers before Oscar could get the orange even half-done. The man came over again, and after father told him he could catch one for himself, the man snapped his fingers under Oscar's nose and said, "I guess that's too big a drink for a guy your size, squirt!" Father laughed and drank his schnappser and told the man that was his youngest — he had one boy — big guy used to play basketball at the university — working for him in New York. "Gonna' play ball someday?" the man asked him. Then, "Better start sprouting if you wanna' be big as your Pop someday!" Father laughed and he and the man had another schnappser.

"That's one hell of a ring you got there!" the man said.

Father held it out for him to see. "Something to pawn when I need my fur coat," father said, "but it's got a nigger in it — see right there?" and the man looked close at the ring, leaning to one side to get the light, and said yes, he saw the nigger, but it was still one hell of a ring for all that.

The man went away then, and Oscar worked at the orange soda while father smoked and pared his nails with a silver knife that had *Buck* engraved on the blade. Then father stepped away from the bar and looked at him for a while, and finally said, "You learn to really swim yet?"

"No," Oscar said, afraid that father would be angry. The last time they went to the cottage, he had told father he could swim, so father threw ten silver dollars off the deep end of the pier and told him to swim and get them. He tried, but it began to go dark as the evening came on, and brother Dick had to fish him out of the water, and father had said to hell with the ten dollars, leave them there if he was going to lie to his own father, and Oscar had been ill most of the night from swallowing lake water.

"Tell you what," father said now, clapping the silver knife together and dropping it in his pocket with all the change, "we'll go and buy us just the best damned back-to-school suit money can buy in this town, and then we'll go see Carl Case at his restaurant, how about that?"

"Who's Carl Case, father?" Oscar asked.

"Why!" father said, "Carl Case — I knew Carl Case when he was smaller than you — Yes sir!" father said. "We'll get all kinds of things you need, and then you come along and just ask Carl Case if he doesn't remember me when I was your size! Know what? I'm gonna' buy you just a damn fine blue suit!"

"Watch out for your old man there, squirt," the man said from behind the bar, "don't let him get you in trouble!"

"You bet!" father said as they left.

The department store had big signs that said BACK TO SKOOL TOGS, and SKOOL DAZE, and many pictures of rulers, and children skipping and carrying books, and slates with sums on them. Father said they'd get the suit first, and then all the trimmings.

The man said, "You can't get a better suit . . . my own boys wear them."

"That's no recommendation!" father said, poking the man in the chest with a brown forefinger. "Is it the best blue suit I can buy? That's all, is it the best blue suit I can buy?" Then they had trouble about making it fit.

"I can't get alterations now, you have to leave it, sir," the man said.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

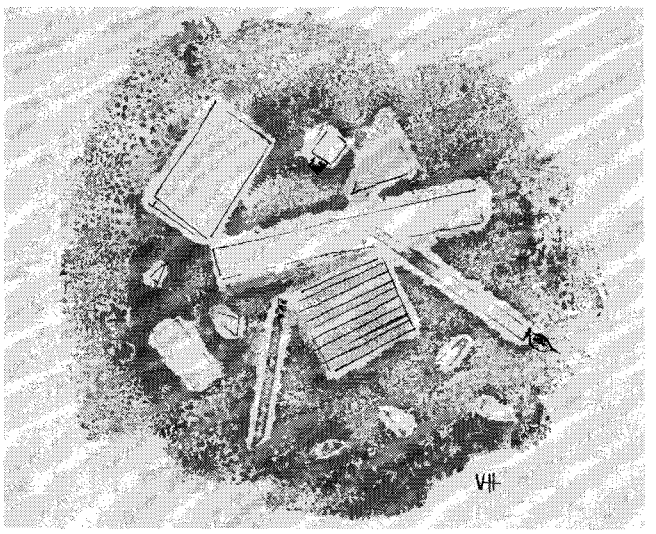
"I'll be goddamned!" father said, "the little man wants to wear the suit right out of the store — he's paying good money and he wants to wear it out, so damnit, get a cuff put on it!" The man went and got another man, and they finally agreed to just bast up the cuffs.

"Is that cash?" the man asked father, "or charge?"

"I'm not exactly traveling broke!" father said, and opened his wallet and gave the man money. Then he said, "Now you just show us where you keep the readin' and writin' materials, huh?"

They walked along the aisle, he and father, and father chose the things for him and gave them to Oscar to carry as they went along.

"Oh, paper!" father said, "got to have us some paper to write on," and he took so many pads of paper from the stack that Oscar dropped



some of them. "Ruler?" father said, "for damn sure a ruler! Pens?" and he took a big fistfull of pens and stuck them in Oscar's pockets. "Erasures? . . . Check! . . . Magic Writing Tablet? — erases itself? . . . Check! Golden Books? . . . Check! Library paste? . . . Check!" When Oscar told him why he was crying, father called another man and told him for to Christ's sake get them a shopping bag, and the man got a big one for Oscar. He told father that he was sure his arms were strong enough to carry the bag.

As a self-imposed punishment for crying, Oscar promised to make himself carry the shopping bag, no matter how heavy it got.

They left soon after that, and father drove the new Chrysler to Carl Case's restaurant. "He'll be in the bar I'll bet," father said when they got there, and he was right, because Carl Case, who was as big and as old as father, with very strong looking arms, was behind the bar. It was very dark in the room, and candles burned at every table, and there were soft blue lights that seemed to flow right out of the corners of the walls, and there was a big fishnet over Oscar's head when he looked up after father lifted him onto the stool. Carl Case was bald and wore a bow tie.

"Buck, you sonofabitch!" Carl Case said when he shook hands with father.

"I swore I'd be damned if I didn't get down here to see you this time!" father said.

"What do you call this little fella' . . . what's his name, little boy blue?" Carl Case asked, putting his hand on Oscar's head.

"That's Oscar — that's my shrimp," father said, "won't let go of that bag of crap I bought him for school . . . stand up on the stool and show him your new suit, boy!" father said, "I think that little suit is the nuts on him!" Then father and Carl Case had schnappsers, and Carl Case gave Oscar a lime soda because he said he couldn't move any of that orange crap in his place. He found a way, though, to balance the heavy shopping bag on his lap while he drank the soda.

"Yes sir," Carl Case said, "I knew your old man when he was your size . . . you got a lot of growing to do to fit his shoes, buster!" Father laughed hard at that and said that he guessed Oscar was the runt of his litter.

"I've got Dick out in New York with me now, you know," father said.

"You don't say!" Carl Case said. They drank schnappsers then and father told Carl Case all about business in New York.

"Your old man's ripping them up in New York, boy, did you hear that? What do you think about that?" Carl Case asked him. Oscar could have told him he knew that his father was flush, but he wasn't sure he ought to. "You don't say one hell of a lot, do you?" Carl Case said.

"Can't you talk?" father asked him.

"Carl Case has strong looking arms," Oscar said, to show that the cat hadn't got his tongue.

"Sonofagun! Did you hear that, Buck?" Carl Case said, laughing and holding out his big, bare forearms.

"What d'you mean?" father said, taking off his jacket and rolling up his sleeve. He made a fist and laid his arm on the bar in front of Oscar. "What the hell's wrong with your own father's arm! Answer me, damnit! Is there anything wrong with your own father's arm, Oscar?" he said. Oscar shook his head no, because

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he was afraid that he'd cry if he tried to speak, and he'd promised himself not to do that again.

"Where'd you ever get a handle like Oscar for him, Buck?" Carl Case asked.

"Oh!" father said, "that's his mother's doing — she had to name him after her squarehead father!"

"Swede?" Carl Case asked, pouring more schnappsers.

"Swede! I guess Swede!" father said, "Old Swede farmer wanted to sit in a corner and eat everything out of one bowl . . . Oscar!"

"What, father?" Oscar said, and Carl Case laughed at that.

"I wasn't talking to you," father said, "and why can't you call me Buck? Your brother Dick calls me Buck . . . let's hear you call me Buck once," he said, leaning his face down close to Oscar.

First Oscar pretended to have trouble holding the shopping bag on his lap, but then, when father took hold of his chin with his two brown smoking fingers and made him look right at him, he had to shake his head no and refuse. "What's wrong?" father said, "your mother tell you not to call me Buck? Call me Buck just once! Your brother Dick does . . . won't you say it just once?"

Then father let go of his chin and said the hell with it, he was his mother's son, wasn't he. "She still the same way, Buck?" Carl Case asked.

"Christ on a crutch!" father said. "See that blue suit I bought the kid? That's the best, bestest bluest suit money can buy in this town . . . do you even like your new blue suit I bought you? he asked Oscar. Oscar was going to say yes, he did, but the shopping bag really did begin to slip this time, and he grabbed for it, and his lime soda spilled into his lap. "Oh Christ!" father said.

"We'll just wipe that up and it'll be good as new," Carl Case said, getting a cloth.

Oscar didn't remember falling asleep. He remembered that father had rolled his sleeve back down, and he and Carl Case were having more schnappsers . . . and there was a faint echo in his memory of Carl Case saying, "I ought to get my waitresses to wear blue, Buck, it looks good as hell what with the lights."

He was lying on the seat of one of the booths in Carl Case's restaurant when he woke up. A policeman was leaning over him, looking closely at him, his mouth moving as though he were chewing gum. "This *is* your boy, isn't it?" the policeman said, and when he straightened up, the leather of the booth creaked and groaned where the policeman rested his hand. Oscar was sweating from his sleep, and his new blue suit . . . bluer than the policeman's uniform, chafed him at his throat and wrists, and his blue woolly trousers had drawn up hotly around his crotch while he slept.

"She's sending cops now, Carl," father said, "she's sending the goddamn gestapo after me now . . . I committed a crime, I took my boy out for the day . . . I'm a goddamned criminal!" Father was still at the bar, standing up, and another policeman was holding him by the arm.

"This boy was supposed to be home at six o'clock," the first policeman said, "if this boy's in his mother's custody, then the law says you get him home by when she says so." Then the policeman helped Oscar to sit up, and said to him, "What's your name, boy?"

"Oscar Maddox. That's my father," he said, pointing.

"No, no!" father said, "don't say I'm your father . . . if I'm your father, then I'm a criminal . . . my name's Buck Maddox, and I don't know the kid, officer!"

"Now, Buck," Carl Case said from behind the bar, "the officer don't mean to call you that."

"Let's go home, boy," the policeman said, getting Oscar to stand on the floor. He felt the pins and needles of sleep in his legs. He clenched and extended his fingers, feeling his skin sticky, and his new blue suit seemed to heat his body hotter and hotter, until he had to squirm his toes inside his shoes to keep from taking off his jacket.

"Yes," father said, "let's go see what kind of a criminal I am!" But Oscar wouldn't go along with the policeman until he had found his shopping bag of school supplies. He might have slept again in the squad car on the way home, but he couldn't be sure, because the shopping bag was still in his hands when the policeman opened the door of the squad car for him to get out, making the dome light go on.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Upsy-daisy!" the policeman said, and took him by the hand and led him up the walk to his front door. Oscar thought that the two of them, he and the big policeman, were nearly invisible in the darkness of the night as they went up the walk, dressed in bluest blue. Then father's new Chrysler drove up behind the squad car, the other policeman got out and went around and opened the door for father, and he heard father say, "The condemned man ate a hearty meal."

Then all of them were in the front hall. Sister Rose had her hands on her hips, yelling at father, and brother Len was there too, from all the way across town . There was no doubt but that mother could hear it in the bedroom. Oscar wondered if she came out while he and father were gone, or if she stayed in there until father was gone away for good until the next time for a big splash.

"The police, Rose?" father was saying, "the police you had to call on me? Did you think I'd run off with him? Did you?" Father tried to touch Rose, but she pushed him away, and stumbling backwards, one of the policemen brushed Oscar into the corner next to the umbrella rack, where he stood alone and watched, and listened.

"You haven't bought the right to put your hands on me!" Rose yelled, her eyebrows raised. The policeman told her not to yell.

"That's all you want . . . why didn't you just tell the cops to bring my wallet home, and save me the trouble of a trip . . . next time I'll just send you a check, Rose!" father said.

"All right, let's don't have any of this —" the policeman began to say, but father wouldn't let him finish.

"Here," father said, "here! Take it and put it in hock, I'm a little short for cash!" he said. And father twisted off the big diamond ring from his brown smoking finger and threw it, and it hit brother Len in the neck. There's a nigger in it, there's a nigger in it! Oscar wanted to say from his dark front hall corner. They were all so big and loud, he seemed to be looking out and up at them from the bottom of a deep, dark hole . . . a dark, warm, itchy hole that grew hotter and hotter.

"You bastard!" brother Len said, and the policeman tried to stop him, but Len was too fast, and he hit father with his fist, and father fell back against Oscar, nearly crushing him under his weight and the bulky, sharp-edged weight of the heavy shopping bag that Oscar still held. Brother Len yelled, "Ow!" when the first policeman grabbed his arm and put a chain on his wrist and twisted it.

"That'll be enough, that'll just be enough!" the policeman said.

Father spit blood on the front hall floor and said, "You forgot I was still your father after all . . . the hell with you!"

"You ruin, you ruin everything," Rose said, crying.

"Come on now," the policeman said to Len, "you didn't want to do anything like that."

"Dad, Dad," brother Len said, "I didn't mean that . . . I didn't mean that, Dad," and he put his free hand out to father.

"Ah bullshit!" faither said, "all you want's the money . . . don't give me the Dad crap, I'm no father, I'm Buck Maddox . . . if I'm Dad I go to jail for a criminal . . . I'm Buck Maddox," father said, and he started to push his way past the other policeman toward the outside door.

"Don't be an ass!" sister Rose said, still crying.

"I'm sorry I hit you, Dad," Len said, trying to reach father with his hand.

"I'm just Buck Maddox, Buck Maddox, and I haven't got any more money, so you'll all have to wait!" father said.

"Now, Buck, easy does it, huh?" the other policeman said.

"I'm not Dad — the goddamn hell with Dad!" father said, on the front porch now, the other policeman helping him with the first steps.

Then mother came running into the front hall, and the first policeman and Rose and Len had to hold her from going out after father. "Get out! Get out!" she screamed, her voice breaking through the dark night, covering the sound of the big, full shopping bag hitting the front hall floor, its sides splitting, and pencils, pens, paper, sliding across the tiles . . .

Covering the sound of Oscar's voice, as he spoke, his hands raised toward the front door, only his hands and the rich, blue wool cuffs of his jacket sleeves sticking out of the dark corner where he stood next to the umbrella rack . . .

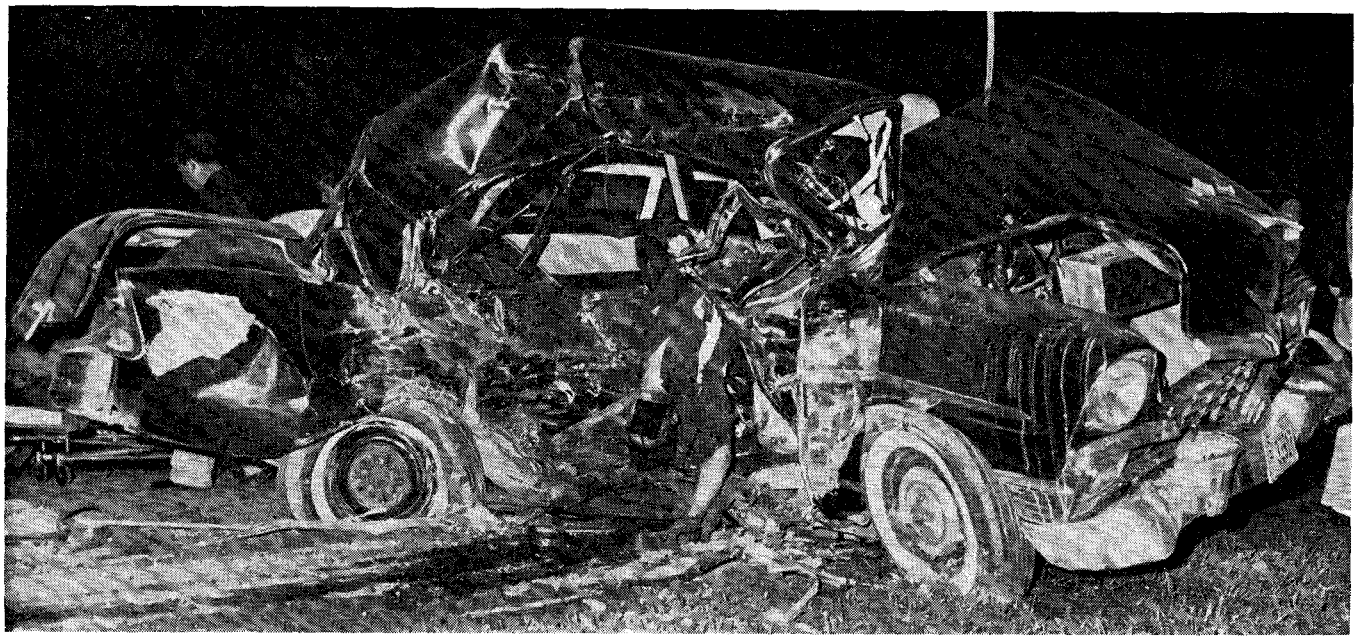
"Father," he said, "father . . ."

ANOTHER NOTE TO THALIA

When you have made faults worse by indiscretion,
Estranged your husband or outraged your mother,
Or, worst of all, have counterfeited passion
When you were sick of all the phonies offered —
Remember that your father too was foolish
And cruel and indiscreet and acted rashly,
And lived
And thought his love for you had made him lucky.

Nicholas Crome

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Dial M(otorist) for Murder

Leslie M. LeCron

If some terrible calamity were to strike a city the size of Philadelphia, killing over 40,000 people and injuring another million inhabitants, the entire country would be horrified. This is the approximate traffic toll each year in the United States. Only the victims seem to care.

The public, legislators, and traffic officials in most states do little to curb the rising accident rate. Laws could be passed which would reduce it by at least half. The obvious answer to the problem is to remove from our streets and highways the types of drivers who cause most of the accidents. This could be done by revoking the licenses of about three percent of all motorists.

What would be the result if the accident rate were to be cut in half? Of most importance would be the saving of more than twenty thousand lives and injury to about a million others. The financial loss from automobile accidents is about eight billion dollars a year, without considering the cost for property and collision insurance. A saving of half this amount should be worthwhile.

To reduce the accident rate by half would have a good effect on our courts, with an additional very large saving in court costs. In New York City alone, over 190,000 claims for bodily injury are filed each year. Courts everywhere are swamped by cases of injury and property damage suits. It may take years before cases are heard in court.

There is a less favorable side of the picture which is one reason why legislators do little to cut the accident rate. The automobile and related industries would be hurt to some extent. There would be a slight decline in new car sales, though more in the sale of used cars because the type of driver who would lose his license most likely drives an older car. Automobile repair men would also lose business.

State and local governments receive large sums from fines for traffic violations levied against those who would be removed from the roads by revoking their licenses. *This is one of the main reasons why adequate laws are not passed.* Still another loss would be to the attorneys. Attorney fees account for at least twenty-five percent of the total amount paid in the settlement of damage and personal injury claims. Legislatures are largely made up of attorneys. One could suspect that this has a bearing on the failure to enact proper laws!

If closer restriction of drivers' licensing ensued, whose should be revoked? No alcoholic should ever be permitted to drive, nor should narcotic addicts. Psychiatrists estimate that there are at least four million known alcoholics

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in this country and probably as many more who should be so classified. The number of addicts is unknown but it is large. All these people are potential killers on the highways.

In California in 1961 the chief of the state motor vehicle department began suspending the licenses of everyone convicted of drunk driving. Hundreds of these dangerous motorists lost their licenses. This caused a furor. The project was abandoned when state judges attacked the policy claiming that this was in their jurisdiction and not in that of the motor vehicle department. Since then, many lenient judges have failed to suspend licenses for drunk driving, or have set only short term suspensions. The drunks soon return to the highways.

Some states have laws providing for mandatory suspension or revocation of license on conviction of drunk driving or narcotic addiction. None provides for compulsory registration by physicians of known alcoholics although in some states narcotic addiction must be reported. When loss of license follows conviction after an accident, it is locking the barn door too late. Suspension should always be compulsory. A second drunk driving conviction should call for permanent loss of license. Few states have such a provision.

Most states specify that an applicant for a license be free of any mental condition which would make him unsafe as a driver. No way of determining this is provided although some states do suspend the license of anyone confined to a mental institution. Of course, a confined person could not drive anyhow! Many psychotics are not confined and may be potentially dangerous drivers. No state requires psychiatrists to report such persons.

The reckless driver, frequently ticketed for traffic violations, is another type who should be permanently barred from operating a car. Every state has these drivers, often juveniles. Only a few require mandatory loss or suspension of licenses for reckless drivers, usually leaving it to the discretion of judges. Some do have good laws in this respect, with compulsory loss of license based on a point system for moving violations. Among those states with better laws are Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Virginia, and Wyoming. Yet not a single one has really adequate laws because all removal of licenses is based on conviction rather than eliminating potentially accident-prone individuals prior to the occurrence of accidents. This is punishment rather than prevention. In a survey, four out of five states, including some with the best laws, report their accident rate as higher in 1963 than in 1962. This is not in total accidents but in percentage of total car registrations.

Insurance companies have found that they must charge a much higher rate if there is a male under twenty-five years of age in a family. Recklessness, speeding, drag-racing on the part of male juveniles is well-known. Boys often see themselves as highly skilled, superior drivers. This is seldom true. Most are very poor drivers, through lack of experience and attitudes. Many parents make no effort to curb the antics of their juveniles. Insurance will cover, so why bother?

Parents are popularly supposed to love their children. Most do, but psychiatrists who treat emotionally disturbed people learn that family relationships frequently are not what they seem. Many parents hate their children and many children hate one or both of their parents. Delinquency is often the result. Unconsciously, such a parent may wish to be rid of his children. As

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a result of such unconscious desires, children may be allowed to play in the street or permitted to drive the family car without supervision.

Factories with a large number of employees have found that 80% of all industrial accidents happen to 20% of their employees. This indicates that most "accidents" are not the result of chance but are unconsciously motivated and intentional. The victim is punishing himself because of feelings of guilt. Probably about the same percentage of unconsciously inspired accidents happens with automobiles as in industry.

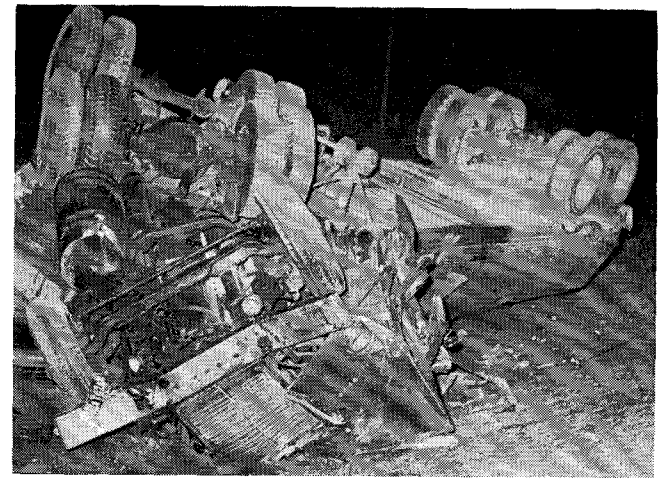
Many people are filled with feelings of frustration, rage and hostility. These emotions may be vented by hurting others as well as oneself. Carelessness, recklessness, and other behavior patterns often accompany such emotions. As one result, these people may be subject to motor accidents, though such drivers would have no conscious realization of this subconscious urge.

Controlling an automobile which has from one hundred to three hundred horsepower gives many a driver a sense of power which he otherwise lacks. On the road the meek individual may change into a cursing, reckless, demon driver. With speed and power at his command, he feels safe in taking out his hostilities on other motorists because he can escape quickly if anything happens. Minority groups may find their frustrations and hostilities relieved when at the wheel of a car. Recklessness then may be a frequent source of accidents.

The character and temperament of even the average, normal individual often change for the worse when he drives. Common courtesy often vanishes under the tensions of traffic conditions and the actions of other drivers.

Less than half of hit-and-run drivers are ever arrested. Those who are caught should never be allowed to drive again. Very few states specify permanent revocation of license for this offense. The person who drives when he has lost his license is another who should be permanently deprived of the right to drive.

Of course excessive speed is one of the main reasons for accidents. Another is the very conservative motorist who drives slowly and cautiously and blocks traffic. Elderly people often fall into this category. To pass the slow driver on a two-lane road, the impatient, reckless motorist takes a chance. Another accident may result. Although his thinking is quite wrong, the slow, hesitant driver usually feels safest when in the left lane of traffic, to the annoyance



of those wishing to pass him. In fact the right lane is far safer.

While some traffic violations are the result of ignorance, the majority occur when the motorist takes a chance, believing no traffic officer will be there to cite him when he commits an offense. Every driver daily witnesses such violations. As a test, this writer counted the violations he saw while driving an eight-mile stretch at the legal speed limit in city driving. There were eighty-eight violations noted; sixty-six of them were by drivers exceeding the speed limit. Others included running traffic lights, failing to stop at stop signs, cutting in, failing to signal turns, illegal turns, crossing over double line in passing, etc.

Auto manufacturers contribute to the increasing accident rate by building cars with greater speed and more power. A former agreement among them to hold the line has recently been set aside and the race is again on for more speed and power. Only because of recent laws in some states requiring safety belts in all new cars have the manufacturers been forced to provide them as factory equipment. Where they are used, injuries in accidents are greatly reduced.

Most states need revision of their traffic speed laws and the same is true of city regulations. A state may set reasonable speed limits on highways, but cities and towns usually make their own widely varying rules. Unrealistic speed laws, whether state or local, make all of us violators of the law, which tends to bring contempt for all law.

Ten, fifteen, twenty, and twenty-five mile limits are common in many cities and towns. In most situations there is no justification for such low limits. Twenty miles per hour when passing a school bus may be a suitable limit but

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it is unrealistic under any other circumstance.

Is the purpose of such low limits profit from fines or to prevent accidents? State legislatures should eliminate the power of local politicians to make traffic regulations. This would tend to eliminate speed traps and make for uniformity of laws.

In examining the general speed limits in the various states, they are usually found to be adequate, with some exceptions. A few states still have limits as low as 45 or 50 miles per hour, a relic of the early days of the automobile and probably retained to produce income from fines.

The age limit to obtain a license is 16 years in the majority of the states. In a few this is 15 or 17. Strangely, in several states with the best laws, a fourteen-year-old is permitted to drive a motor scooter or power cycle. This is like handing a loaded gun to a child. Any parent permitting a child of this age to drive such a vehicle must wish to be rid of his offspring!

Liability insurance was compulsory in 1963 in only three states, New York, Massachusetts, and North Carolina. When there is responsibility for an accident, a number of states provide for loss of license until the damage is paid for, but many impecunious drivers take a chance and forego insurance. The innocent victim is unable to collect damages unless he has his own insurance to cover.

Even more badly needed than compulsory liability insurance are revisions in insurance laws as to negligence in accidents so there will be coverage regardless of fault. In all but five states liability is based entirely on proof of negligence on the part of one of the parties involved. If both drivers in an accident are negligent, or if neither is proved negligent, neither person can collect compensation, although both might be injured. If you will check your own policy, you probably will find you are not covered in such a situation! If you are struck by a driver who has suffered a heart attack, or some other kind of seizure, you cannot collect damages unless able to prove that he knew of his condition and thus was negligent. Few motorists are aware of these facts, believing they are covered by their insurance.

Anyone who has ever been in a traffic court must have witnessed flagrant injustices visited on helpless motorists. A principle of law is that a person is considered innocent until proven guilty of an offense. This principle is reversed in traffic courts. There you must prove yourself not guilty. Unless you have several witnesses, it is impossible. The word of the arresting officer is always accepted as truth, your own statements under oath disregarded.

In spite of official denials, traffic officers must have quotas or must cite a goodly number of motorists each shift they work or they hear from their superiors. Toward the end of a tour of duty by an officer, a motorist may be cited for the most minor infraction, or for none at all. Justices of the peace and traffic court judges are city officials. As traffic laws are aimed at providing revenue, these officials are expected to levy fines. They do. The only safe way for a motorist to receive justice in traffic cases is to demand a jury trial where he will have a chance to prove himself innocent.

Aside from the alcoholics, dope addicts, mental cases, and those drivers with many violations on their records, it is difficult to determine who else should not be allowed to drive. However, it is possible. There are psychological personality tests which could be used to determine those who are unsafe. The McGuire Safe Driver Test is used by many businesses in hiring personnel who will handle their cars and trucks. Every applicant for a driver's license should be given such tests. *Not a single state requires this.*

Another way to bring revision of state laws would be for Congress to pass a law requiring a national driving license for every motorist who crosses a state line. With strict driving tests of ability and with personality testing, many would be unable to obtain a national license. State legislatures might then make their own laws conform to national requirements.

Photographs by Morris Potter

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Original Investment

Alyce
Ingram

Her appointment at the Bertrand Beauty Salon was for 3:30 with Miss Gwen. It was a standing appointment for Thursdays (except for that time spent in the hospital for plastic surgery and skin grafting and even *then* Miss Gwen had come once, after hours, carrying a hand dryer kit).

Now from behind the glosheen curtain, black and white pinstriped, came a golden lacquered head and asked Mrs. Vernon to be seated. " . . . while I just finish up on Mrs. Altshuler." Miss Gwen's voice was throaty and warm. She was admonishing Mrs. Altshuler not to let those warts on her hand go.

"Now if they were on your feet," she was saying, "I wouldn't open my mouth. But your hands. That's another thing altogether. I mean, hands are an indication of character. And as far as that's concerned, you've got to protect your original investment. Where would you be without hands?"

Miss Gwen was just about the most popular of the operators at the salon. Even Mrs. Bertrand herself had Miss Gwen. She knew how to make the most of what you had. Women walked out of the place as though they knew where they were going in life.

Not that Miss Gwen's success was due entirely to sprays and powders, bobby pins and clips. No, it was something of herself she gave to her patrons they would tell one another. She gave you confidence in yourself. When once you heard her say, "We owe it to ourselves to make the most of what God gave us," you simply felt as though you were letting down the Creator himself if you didn't keep yourself up. (Letting down Miss Gwen besides. After all the time she spent building you up.)

Pauline Vernon now sat and flipped aimlessly through a weekly news magazine. She hated having to wait by herself and confessed to being spoiled. For years Mr. Vernon came along with her to the beauty parlor (or dressmaker or whatever) and it was only since her stay in the hospital that he had ceased accompanying her as she kept appointments. During her absence from home, while in the hospital, he had gone and bought himself a dog. A black French poodle named Baron who did all manner of tricks. The two of them now spending almost all of Mr. Vernon's free time romping in the park, and practicing, with Mr. Vernon bringing home ecstatic accounts of Baron's progress.

Miss Elaine, the receptionist, looked up from her appointment book. "Mr. Vernon walking the dog again?" she asked pleasantly.

Mrs. Vernon barely nodded. Miss Elaine was not one of her favorite people. A seemingly simple statement such as she had just made carried undertones of ridicule. As though she were in on some private joke from which Mrs. Vernon was excluded.

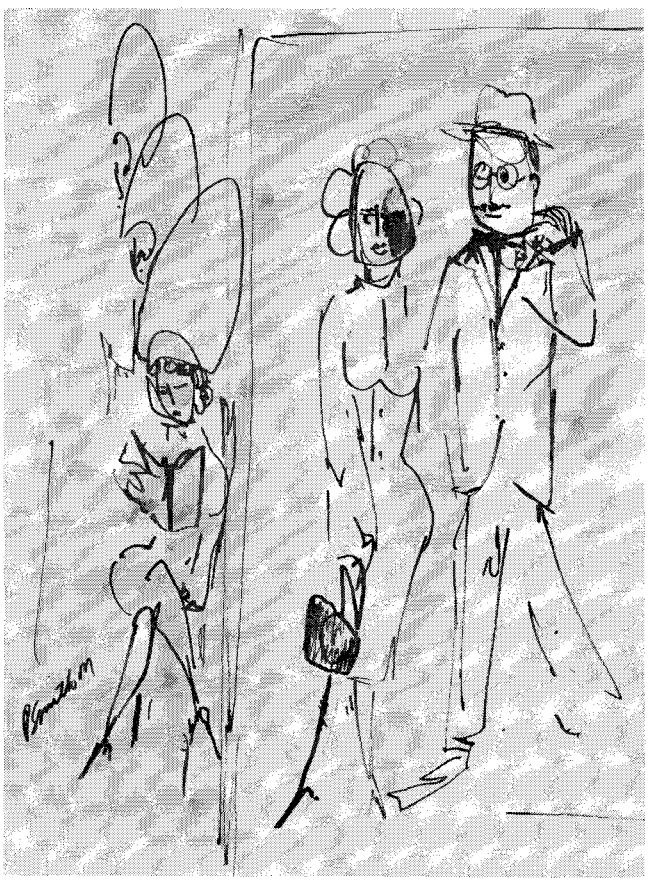
Miss Elaine shook her head. "Well, that dog is certainly beating your time," she said. "When I think of how Mr. Vernon used to sit and wait. And *wait* and wait. Not letting you out of his sight. My. Times have certainly changed." Her laughter tinkled cruelly. "I guess it's really a dog's world."

The telephone rang and Mrs. Vernon was glad. If Miss Elaine had continued with her snide remarks Mrs. Vernon felt she would have had to leave. That was the trouble with coming to a certain place too long. Confidences were dropped. And soon they knew too much about your personal affairs. And they took liberties.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You became vulnerable. But she simply could not do without Miss Gwen. Why, without Miss Gwen she would never have screwed up enough courage to go into the hospital and come out with this practically new face. Or new *half* a face.

She reached up, tentatively, and touched her left cheek. That only a few months ago was covered with hideous, prune-like folds of pitted skin. And now was every bit as smooth as even Miss Elaine's if you wanted to make unfavorable comparison.



Miss Elaine knew very well, as all of them did, how Mr. Vernon had married her *with* a scarred face. When she was way past the age of ever expecting to get married. At least to someone as attractive as Mr. Vernon. And he not even permitting her to buy those blemish-covering cosmetics. Saying he was afraid of possible infection. Even objecting, when they walked, if she so much as tried to cover her cheek wearing a head scarf tied under her chin. Always so proud, anxious, to be seen with her.

Yes, Miss Elaine knew that. So it was really none of her business if Mr. Vernon had decided to take Baron to the park instead of accompanying her today. It was certainly no reflection on Mr. Vernon's devotion.

Miss Gwen had settled Mrs. Altshuler under a dryer and padded her ears with cotton. She beckoned to Mrs. Vernon. Mrs. Vernon went into the vacated booth and sat down. It was good to have privacy, away from Miss Elaine's searching eye. Miss Gwen shook out a fresh white towel and placed it around her shoulders. She lay back with her head in the drain tray.

Miss Gwen peered intently at her left cheek. "Just doesn't seem possible," she said finally. "Not a sign of the handicap." (She had never referred to the offending birthmark as anything but "the handicap.") For the first time, Mrs. Vernon wished, fervently, her operator would talk about something else. It was bad enough having to listen to Miss Elaine's sly innuendoes without now going over the details of her plastic surgery. She wanted very much, now, to be cheered. Miss Gwen couldn't know how many hours she lay awake last night wondering if Mr. Vernon would ever have bought the dog had she not left him to go to the hospital. Wondering, too, whether others (besides Miss Elaine) were beginning to notice that Mr. Vernon no longer seemed as eager for her company as he formerly had been. That she was playing second fiddle to a dog. Who did tricks.

For an instant she felt a sudden hostility toward Miss Gwen for having instigated the whole thing. Mr. Vernon had opposed it from the start. Refusing, even, to pay for it. Making her use her small inheritance for the doctor's bill. Mr. Vernon had hinted that there might be an alliance between Miss Gwen and Dr. Lazier with Miss Gwen receiving kick-backs for sending him patients. After an exchange of words with her husband, Mrs. Vernon had almost backed down and canceled the appointment.

But Miss Gwen had remained adamant. "Well, I think it's terrific," she'd said, "the way the guy dotes on you. Just as you are. Not wanting you changed, handicap and all. When I think of *my* husband. Why, when I've got so much as a pimple that time of the month, he hurts. But that Clyde Vernon. He's one in a million. Which is exactly why I say, chum, 'Protect your original investment.'" And she had gone on to quote statistics of how many more men than women there were to go around.

The part about statistics was frightening. There was something so concrete, so unassailable, about figures. They don't lie. And Clyde was still a very attractive man. Darned attractive. And neat as a pin. So, feeling ill-equipped to deal with a rival (should one appear) she

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had gone ahead with Dr. Lazier and plastic surgery. And lost Mr. Vernon in the process. If only there were someone to tell her what had happened. She suspected, angrily, that Miss Elaine knew the answers to such conundrums in life. And tears stung. She closed her eyes.

Now Miss Gwen sprayed her hair vigorously. "Mr. Vernon certainly dotes on that dog of his," she said, working in the shampoo. "I see him mornings when I come to work. Proud as punch. He waits until the lights change, then crosses over. And everybody stops to watch. He gets himself quite an audience. A regular side show." She chuckled.

"Yes," Mrs. Vernon agreed quietly. "Clyde is very fond of Baron."

Miss Gwen pursued the sore subject. "And those outfits. Why, that dog is dressed better than most kids. How many changes does he have, by the way?"

Mrs. Vernon counted on her fingers, not opening her eyes. "Well, there's the purple. With the white rabbit trim."

"Oh, the one he had on yesterday," Miss Gwen squealed. "With those adorable little white pom poms. If that wasn't the cutest."

"Then there's the red corduroy," Mrs. Vernon said holding up another finger. "That makes two. It has black velvet trim and brass buttons. And comes wih a teensy alpine hat."

"I don't believe I've seen that one," Miss Gwen said regretfully, rinsing out the first shampoo.

"Well, the royal blue mohair with grey squirrel and the black and white check with little bells. How many is that?" Mrs. Vernon opened her eyes.

"That's four," said Miss Gwen. Giving her a second application of shampoo. "He's wearing the one with bells today, isn't he?"

"Yes," Mrs. Vernon said wearily. "That's Mr. Vernon's favorite. He planned to go down this afternoon and pick up Baron's latest outfit he's had on order. I can't imagine what it will be like."

Miss Gwen sighed. "I haven't had a thing new for ages. Same old rags," she said.

Mrs. Vernon lapsed into silence. She had never been very much interested in clothes. Neither had Mr. Vernon. This interest of his in Baron's wardrobe was terribly strange. He had become as interested in dog fashions as little girls who owned those dolls that were the rage.

Miss Gwen rinsed. "Chester and I watched them in the park Saturday," she said. "Mr. Vernon just about got Baron to walk on his hind legs. It was so darned cute. Everybody was watching them. Everyone but Chester. And he's so darned jealous of accomplishments." For a moment Miss Gwen's fingers were taut on her skull. "He is certainly darling," she said.

"Mr. Vernon?" asked Mrs. Vernon.

"Well, he's darling, too," Miss Gwen said, "bringing us chocolates and all. But I meant Baron. I remember how Mr. Vernon used to be proud of you like that. The way he'd fiddle with his tie when people would look your way."

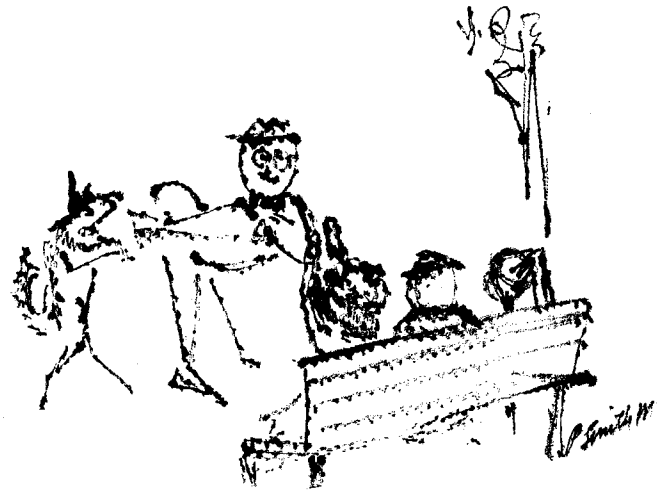
Mrs. Vernon said she had never noticed that. Miss Gwen started to make pin curls. "I did," she said. "Because he's the only man I know who wears a bow tie. And I remember how, when the two of you would step in that front door together, how we'd look up and there Mr. Vernon would be, fiddling with his tie. Just advertising that he was with you, sort of. It was cute." She flicked her finger on Mrs. Vernon's new cheek. And motioned with a jerk of her head toward Mrs. Altshuler. "Well, at least you made the most of your potential. Like I say, you've got to protect the original investment. Not that Mr. Vernon would ever so much as *look* at another woman . . . but still and all. A woman can't take chances."

Miss Gwen finished up on the pin curls and placed Mrs. Vernon under the dryer next to Mrs. Altshuler. Mrs. Altshuler was now studying her hands, picking at the warts.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After her hair had dried and been combed, Mrs. Vernon decided to sit in the park for a time. Mr. Vernon and Baron spent a great deal of time in the park. Perhaps she would run into them and join in their fun. The thought of going home to empty rooms made her want to cry. She and Mr. Vernon, before the plastic surgery, had been inseparable. Now she seldom had his company.

She took a seat in the park at the main entrance. The bus shelter was adjacent and a crowd had gathered awaiting the arrival of transportation. Children were scuttling about holding balloons on sticks. Young mothers were carrying babies and lunch baskets. Mrs. Vernon's park bench was beside a eucalyptus tree. She was glad of the partial protection from viewers. Mr. Vernon always insisted upon being right out in the open with her, going straight to the empty table in the middle of the restaurant instead of taking a booth. He had always been so proud to be her escort, handicap notwithstanding. Behind the tree a young couple sprawled, the two of them sunning themselves while listening to a transistor radio. Mrs. Vernon felt a chill in the air and buttoned her sweater, marveling that the young people seemed perfectly comfortable in their briefs. But then admitting she had felt chilled ever since coming home from the hospital. She wondered whether plastic surgery caused one's blood to become low.



And then she saw her husband. Her heart quickened. He was, as Miss Gwen said earlier, a very attractive man. And she marveled anew that he had ever seen fit to marry her, particularly with the horrible left cheek. They had stopped at the street corner for a changing light. They make a pretty picture, she thought enviously, Clyde and the dog. Baron was wearing an outfit she had not seen. Evidently it was the one recently ordered. It was a fringed chamois jacket, tiny stetson hat and cowboy boots. People had begun to leave the bus shelter to catch a glimpse of them entering the park.

The sunning couple sat up. "Oh, isn't that darling," she exclaimed. "Look. The dog is walking upright. Just look at that, Hal. Look at that darling dog."

For Baron was indeed walking upright. Somewhat awkwardly. His paws extended. Mr. Vernon was beaming.

"Look at that darling dog," the young man mimicked. "Look at that fool man, you mean. It's downright cruel to train a dog that way. It's not natural, his walking upright."

"You're just jealous," she pouted. "Because everybody's looking at them."

"Everybody's looking at *him,*" the young man snapped. "Exhibitionist."

Mrs. Vernon raised her hand to signal her husband then stopped in midair. She felt vaguely uncomfortable. Mr. Vernon was fiddling with his bow tie.

Just as Miss Gwen had said.

POINT DEFIANCE

Gardens and timber,
a zoo and a salt-
water beach. Those
captive fish, do they
care? We paused by the
illuminated tanks
in the aquarium.
And the snakes, do they
mind the walls? We pressed
our heads against glass
in the white aisles
of the reptile house.

Sunday morning the
boathouse for pancakes,
Sunday evening a
fire on the beach.
When we kiss, what do
you think? I think of
snow, I think of seashells,
I think of wheat. In
their cages the lions
roar. They mind it,
but I think of a room.

Stephen Tudor

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Post-Mortem

Charles J. Shagoury

Illustrations Courtesy of
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Arts Medica Collection

For the physician, most illnesses are a contest with death.

He can remember the little pimple of the upper lip that ended with fatal septicemia, and the slight cold that ended with death from pneumonia. When death seems least in earnest, the physician must be on the alert for the "turn for the worst." Like everyone else, the doctor enjoys the occasional sweet smell of success in these contests. He is particularly gratified when the contest was prolonged and difficult and the ultimate victory called for unusual skill, knowledge, and devotion. There is, of course, the satisfaction of seeing a friend and neighbor restored to health and vigor; there is, too, the enhanced reputation and the financial rewards such successes bring. But the chief gratification of a professional man comes with the successful exercise of his best talents in a cause he knows to be worthy.

The loss of a patient, however long anticipated and inevitable, carries some sting of humiliation and defeat; less if he has been finally released from a long and painful illness, but particularly galling if the patient is young and the illness initially trivial. In these latter cases, the physician is vulnerable to self-questioning. Was he in some way at fault? Would some other physician have done better? Fortunately for his peace of mind, he will have secured the advice of other physicians and need not feel solely responsible. Fortunately too, our patients and their families are generous and sympathetic, and these questions are seldom raised by anyone but the physician himself.

The post-mortem examination nearly always exonerates the physician and restores his confidence. The more interesting cases are those where some wholly unsuspected condition proves to have been responsible for death. Such cases need not imply culpability on the part of the physician. Not all conditions can be diagnosed, even with our present impressive technical resources and knowledge. *As the frontiers of knowledge are expanded, new areas of ignorance develop.* For example, with every new drug, new questions arise concerning adverse effects on the patient, possible allergy, and other unanticipated results of therapy. The physician is always working on the slippery border between knowledge and surmise; he has a thorough knowledge of general principles, but how far do they apply to his unique patient? In some instances, there is simply not enough time for the elaborate tests necessary to establish a diagnosis. There are unfortunate instances of very young children succumbing in a few hours to an overwhelming infection with few or no signs of septicemia which is only revealed by post-mortem examination. In other instances the true diagnosis is masked; the patient appeared to have an acute pneumonia which failed to respond to appropriate treatment because he had an underlying cancer of the lung. Not too many years ago, before accurate diagnostic tests for syphilis were developed, the spirochete was frequently found at post-mortem examination to be the unsuspected murderer masquerading as tuberculosis, or liver cirrhosis, or arteriosclerosis.

But personal culpability is rarely an issue nowadays. In the modern hospital, the care of the patient is a team effort. Responsibility is shared among several consultants including one or more internists, radiologists and pathologists. If the X-rays or laboratory specimens are confusing they may be sent to other specialists for an opinion. The personal services of a distinguished specialist at some distance may be sought, or the patient may be sent to a well-known center where superior facilities are available. In addition, where the patient presents an unusual problem, his case may be presented at conferences where further opinion can be obtained. It may be stated with some confidence, then, that, literally, everything possible has been done for the patient who dies in an approved American hospital. Where there is failure, it is not the failure of one man but of modern medical science.

Prominently displayed in the foyer of an approved hospital is a certificate presented by the Joint Commission on Accreditation. This group is made up of representatives from the Ameri-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can Medical Association, the American Hospital Association, the American College of Surgeons, and other bodies interested in raising and maintaining hospital standards. Periodic checks of the records, made by representatives from the J. C. A., ensure that high standards are maintained.

One of the important figures they consider is the percentage of deaths followed by an autopsy. In order for a hospital to retain its accreditation this figure must remain above 25 per cent. This is one of the most important indices by which a hospital is judged. It has been found that a high autopsy rate reflects a high interest in maintaining professional standards throughout the hospital. Where the physicians are diligent in obtaining and attending autopsies, they are also diligent in pursuing post-graduate studies, maintaining and utilizing an adequate medical library, and utilizing the latest technical improvements.

The post-mortem examination is particularly of value for the physician in training, the intern or resident, who is required to attend all post-mortem examinations whenever practicable. The instructive value of the autopsy is that it provides an opportunity for the older physician to find the answers to the questions which plagued him during the patient's life. For the neophyte it provides a chance to become familiar with pathological anatomic material. Hospitals with a teaching program are periodically examined by a representative from the American Medical Association, and here again the autopsy rate is an important index of the level of excellence of the teaching program.

It is a common saying that doctors bury their mistakes, but no group is so assiduous in the investigation of possible error. Each month, each department of the Medical Staff of the hospital holds a "death meeting," at which the deaths of the preceding month are examined, the final course of the patients carefully reviewed, and the possible reasons for the unhappy outcome discussed. Cases of unusual interest are presented to the entire staff for evaluation and comment stressing instructive points: possibly an unlooked-for toxic effect from a medication usually considered harmless, or a bizarre surgical complication to be kept in mind in the future.

In addition to the "death meeting" most hospitals have standing watchdog committees which review deaths in closed session and evaluate possible professional fault. The work of these meetings and committees can be conducted properly only if there has been a post-mortem examination and the final answers established. Without such an examination, much of the discussion must be based on conjecture.

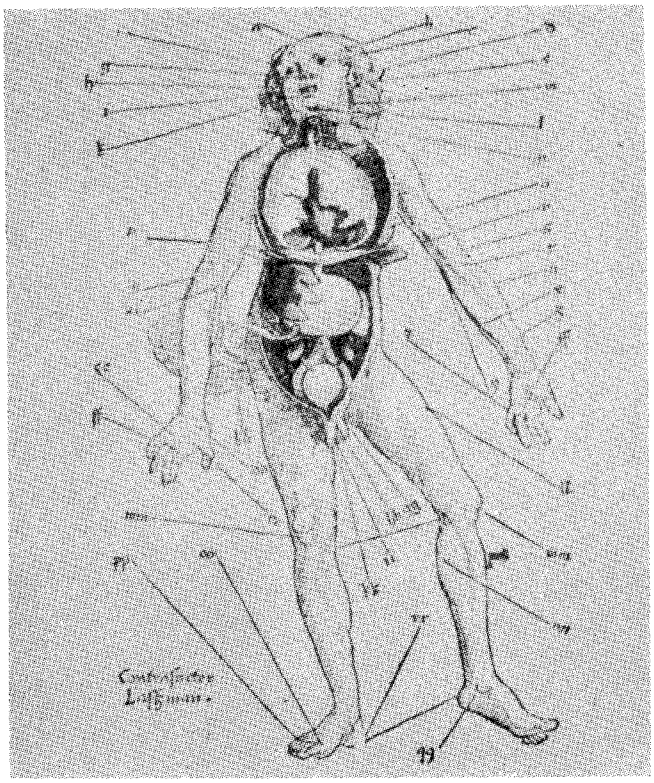
Of course the post-mortem is occasionally a dud. It was something of a surprise to me to discover, early in my medical career, that autopsies do not always reveal the cause of death, or may raise more questions than they answer. Anatomic or bacteriologic abnormality is usually found, and in about 20 per cent of cases the abnormalities found do not appear to be related to the patient's demise.

Nevertheless, the actual process of anatomic dissection of a cadaver is of great value to the medical student, and is a part of the first year course in anatomy. It is of particular value to the future surgeon and pathologist who will be spending much of his professional career in anatomic dissection. Many surgeons make a practice of operating on cadavers to gain in anatomic knowledge and proficiency, especially when developing a new technical procedure or modifying an established one.

Physicians as a group have a remarkable degree of intellectual curiosity. Often, a case with bizarre or baffling features assumes the aspect of an intellectual puzzle the solution of which at the post-mortem table is eagerly awaited. Did the woman really have a rare connective-tissue disease, or were her symptoms an unusual manifestation of allergy? What would heart-valves look like that gave such a peculiar murmur? What did those unusual shadows on the X-ray film mean? Natural curiosity may be reinforced by the wish to be a "majority of one" when the physician's diagnosis was opposed by his colleagues. Sometimes in the apparently hopeless patient, the puzzled physician may seek permission for an autopsy before the patient is dead, and, should the patient recover, his pleasure in the man's recovery may be slightly tempered by a baffled curiosity.

The aspect of the autopsy as a refreshing intellectual exercise and teaching experience is fostered by a practice developed by the Massachusetts General Hospital, and now imitated in most American hospitals. This practice is called the clinico-pathological conference. At this session, a physician is asked to discuss a case he is not familiar with; the case is identified only by a number or initials. He is given the complete medical history of the deceased, the results of laboratory tests and X-rays, and other pertinent data. He must discuss the case and make a diagnosis. The pathologist then de-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



scribes what he found, and presents slides illustrating his findings, or may provide specimens from the cadaver for examination.

Autopsies are of great value in maintaining accuracy of statistics. Death certificates in cases where there is no post-mortem examination are often in error. The statistics on causes of death are the basis for insurance mortality tables and public health measures. It is to the interest of all of us that these statistics be as accurate as possible. The actual examination is carried out by members of the pathology department in the hospital morgue. The cadaver is measured, weighed, and its gross aspects described prior to incision and internal examination. The organs in the chest and abdomen are individually examined, weighed, and specimens removed for microscopic study. Bacteriologic specimens are also taken. The skull is not always opened, particularly if the family does not wish it, but if the patient suffered from mental or nervous symptoms permission for intracranial examination is not usually withheld. If the heart or liver or some other organ presented an unusual feature of scientific interest or might be valuable as teaching material, it may merit anonymous immortality in a jar in the laboratory.

At the conclusion of the examination the body is sewed up and is taken by the undertaker. The p.m. does not interfere with his ministrations, and in some instances makes it easier. There need be no visible disturbance of the deceased, nor interference with facial expression and features beyond what disease and death have caused.

The attending physician must secure the consent of the next of kin for permission to have an autopsy performed. This is more readily granted if, as often happens, the deceased has in life expressed a willingness to be examined after death. It is unfortunate that the bereaved must be approached for their consent while still shocked and confused by death. Many are resistant, clinging to a belief that this examination would mutilate or desecrate the mortal remains of a beloved relative.

Modern medicine is unthinkable without the contributions which previous autopsies have made possible. They may fire the mind of a research scientist to new concepts of diagnosis and treatment and help prevent future deaths from this disease.

A post-mortem examination may yet become a routine part of the final series of rituals with which we honor our dead. In undergoing the autopsy, the dead are making their last contribution to the community of mankind, rendering with their bodies their last service to future generations. It would be a more meaningful service, one from which men and women might derive some satisfaction during life, if they were to make the decision for it while yet alive and so instruct their relatives to spare them an agonizing and often difficult decision.

Every autopsy record, including not only the written description of the findings but the permanently fixed specimens and the microscopic slides made from them, becomes a permanent addition to the hospital records. If of unusual interest, the case may be "written up" in a medical journal to add a little to our medical knowledge of what can happen to someone suffering from a particular illness treated in a particular way. The hospital records are constantly being examined and reexamined for clues of probable relationships which form our only certain knowledge. To take one example, the appendectomy was developed because it was found that patients not operated upon in most cases developed perforation of the appendix and fatal peritonitis.

Post-mortem examination is contrary to no religious belief of modern civilized countries. It is compulsory in Armed Forces hospitals. While I would not favor such compulsion by government agencies in civilian hospitals, I believe that most people are intelligent and public-spirited enough to be persuaded to voluntary permission.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Absence of Valdemar

Rita Madocs

She had been promised a city of green spires, princesses, and rainbows every day.

When, at last, she came to Copenhagen, fleeing, by train, a week of chilling Swedish nights, Sybil stepped into an afternoon of such soft and shimmering gray as if Copenhagen had been built inside a pearl. Lukewarm as fresh milk, the Danish summer lay against her cheeks.

She bought a postcard on which the harbor Mermaid, made of bronze and dreams, was gazing at the blue Sound; and stamps with white ballerinas leaping out of purple. Sitting on her only suitcase, she wrote to her mother in New York:

"Chaste out of Sweden. Now on to Villa Svan's Nest, recommended for travelers of moderate means and good family. Left my copy of Fanny Hill at the railroad station, on a good woman's knitting bag. Hope she reads English. When worrying too much, please remember I'm twenty."

Then a taxi bore her away, skidding in and out of squares, making confetti of the swarms of cyclists in the streets, slipping past churches and palaces with clocks striking from verdigris towers, past flower markets and canals and children with dandelion heads chasing a black cat. On the back of the hand that gripped the steering wheel, the driver wore a tattooed octopus. What would a woman feel, seeing that octopus crawl up her knee? Sybil wondered if she should shudder at that thought or not. She decided not to. Perhaps he was kidnapping her, and she would be able for once to write the truth to her friends who stayed home, sitting on their skepticism as on a fakir's bed of nails, proclaiming that nothing ever happened, or would, no matter where you went, with your mouth open and waiting to be made breathless. Anyway, she would write about having been ravished by an octopus. "Nothing makes a woman feel so safe —" she composed blithely — "as being embraced by eight arms at once."

But she should be thinking of swans, shouldn't she? "Between the Baltic and the North Sea there lies an old Swan's Nest, and it is called Denmark. In it have been born, and will be born hereafter, Swans whose names shall never die." She remembered these lines from her old Andersen book, and how impressed she had been with the swan who beat a marble mountain with his wing until the marble fell to pieces.

What would she find at Villa Swan's Nest? How many tourist swanmaidens would it harbor, all spooning cold buttermilk soup from Royal china plates, and keeping not Kierkegaard but Andersen's fairy tales under their pillows? She hoped for more than that: male swans, terribly wild and poetic — an Erik Swan, a Knud Swan, a Sven Swan, perhaps?

Grinning as she was at her own conjured images, Sybil at the same time wished for them to be true. After all, she had chosen the place because of its romantic name, as she had chosen a Scandinavian holiday after a year's study of Nordic literature. Pure Midsummer madness radiated from fiction created in the Northern latitudes. Nothing like the tired,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

regulated French adultery in the afternoon. Or Italian passion when lovers had nothing in common above the waistline. Or the small American wish for happiness. Love in the North tore souls apart in terrible torment. To wrest the words "I love you" from a Norwegian, for instance, would be well worth a hundred serenades from a Spaniard.

Sybil's sojourn in Stockholm had not only been cold but unfortunate as well. All the Swedes, she had been told, were away on summer holiday. The only male she had spoken to — and mostly in whispering awe — had been Herr Carlsson, the owner of the boarding house where the Tourist Bureau had reserved a room for her, and he wore, in mid-July, felt slippers to sneak around in and hang forbidding signs on door handles, such as: "Use of the bathroom permitted between 12 and 15 o'clock only."

Now Danes, as everyone knows, were either sailors, merchants, or poets, and Sybil was determined, during her stay in Copenhagen, to have nothing to do with those who in any way were contributing to the excellence of Danish butter, ham, and eggs. "Villa Svanerede" would and could not fail her.

But, though far out of the city and in a garden where trees, flowers, and grass grew in poetical freedom, the house was of disappointing red brick. What swans would want to nest here? Now the door would open and a motherly figure in dotted cotton would come down the steps in orthopedic shoes, a woman of the kind that Sybil hardly ever met, being used to Dietrich-voiced mothers in Pucci pants, forever claiming to be their daughters' best friends and yet continually fussing and talking of dangers in a world where there was only boredom and nonchalance.

As the taxi stopped, a black shadow detached itself from a white birch and came forward to open the door of the cab. The face hanging in the dimness of the car, with hair plaited into a pretzel over each ear, was grandmother's.

"Velkommen," said the old woman, "Velkommen."

"Fru Bojesen?"

The woman shook her head and stood back, hiding her hands under an apron. Her dark eyes gave Sybil a frank appraisal, and it must have been then and there that old Berthe, lean though she was herself, decided that all food set before Sybil at the table of Villa Swan's Nest, was to be soaked in cream.

She made for Sybil's luggage, but the girl was quicker. Yet on their way up the gravel path to the house the old woman kept her hand on the suitcase, except when she opened the door and admitted the guest to the gleam and odor of freshly polished floors and the shriek which seemed to come from upstairs, of a distressed woman's voice crying, "Valdemar!" And then again, "Val-de-mar —" and expiring in sobs.

Berthe led Sybil across the hall and into a large room, and there, against the background of two plant-filled windows, was a tableau vivant of three figures, two women's and a man's. On a summer-green love seat, her reddish blond head slightly inclined, her feet crossed at the ankles, her hands hugging each other in her lap, a small round woman was impersonating self-containment. Her eyes were amused, as if she knew too well that the other, younger woman seated on the bench at the piano, was melting away: with the dark, liquid eyes, the loose-lipped mouth, the pale hair streaming down her shoulders, the arms dangling at her sides; and the man, leaning against a glass-walled book case, too pink, too bland — a mollusk occupied with his cigar, undeserving of attention. Certainly, the woman on the love seat was the center piece.

Standing there in her white raincoat on the parquet floor, Sybil said hello, and the picture was shattered. Fru Bojesen — the woman on the love seat — sprang overwhelmingly to life and hurried in a pitapat of welcome towards Sybil, clasping her wrists and holding her firmly and searching her face with a clinging, almost intimate intensity.

"Happy, happy holiday," she said. "I hope you will like it here. We all are so glad to have you."

She spoke English well, though roundly, as if a dumpling were to be swallowed with each word. Thora, her younger sister, having gathered her loose ends up from the piano bench, approached, gave Sybil a few limp fingers, and uttered some surprisingly neat peppermint English phrases.

Herr Bojesen spoke no English at all and from then on established a relationship with Sybil by winking at her, in the morning and in the evening, with one eye, as adults do with children, leaving them to wonder what terrible conspiracy now bound them to one another. An importer of spices, he himself was entirely without flavor, and would, during Sybil's stay at his house, mostly remain hidden behind the spread-out pages of "Politiken." Only that first evening, urged by good manners

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and his wife, Herr Bojesen made a perspiring effort at playing the host, uncorking a bottle of Cherry Heering after their early supper and, to the sounds of a victrola, pushing first his wife, then Sybil, with his protruding stomach once around the room in what was called a fox trot. He did not ask Thora, now reclining on the love seat, and watching them under eyebrows slanting down like an oldfashioned tragedienne's, her face immobile, her mouth mute. She was resting up, Sybil learned, for her performance this evening in a pantomime play at the Peacock Theatre in the Tivoli Amusement Park.

Thora left at seven, but at eight, when Sybil was in her room on the upper floor unpacking, a man's voice somewhere close by called out her name with a sigh, "Oh, Thora . . ."

Sybil opened the door of her room and peered at the closed doors around the landing. These had been properly introduced to her before: Fru and Herr Bojesen's bedroom, the bathroom, Thora's room, Berthe's room, and another guest room, at present unoccupied. But "Thora . . ." somebody sighed, and once more, "Thora . . ."

Downstairs, the telephone rang, and when Herr Bojesen answered, Sybil was surprised that so hearty and booming a voice could be his. *He* certainly wasn't crying for Thora.

In the kitchen, Fru Bojesen could be heard talking to Berthe — the Danes were lively talkers. And yet, when Sybil returned to her room, there clearly was Fru Bojesen, rapidly repeating a Danish sentence somewhere close by. Sybil leaned out of her window, right into a birch tree. Now she convinced herself that Fru Bojesen not only was in the kitchen — she was in the garden as well. And after a brief silence another voice, so close as if someone had spoken from the branches of the tree in front of Sybil's window, another voice sounded, softly, "Valdemar . . ." It was Thora's, but how could it be?

Bewildered, Sybil stepped back into the room and met herself in the full-length mirror on the wall, a tall thin girl in a white dress. She loosened the knot at the back of her head, and her brown hair fell in gleaming strands over her shoulders. The knock at the door startled her, and when Fru Bojesen entered, Sybil gathered the fullness of her hair around her, as if she were naked. Fru Bojesen smiled. "What pretty hair," she said and came nearer and touched the ends, twirling them between the tips of her fingers, as if testing the texture of cloth. "But it needs brushing. Come, I'll do it for you."

Sybil's hair brushes on the dressing table dismayed Fru Bojesen. "Oh no, not nylon," she said, "too cruel!" She went to fetch her own — two fine bristle brushes, backed in silver, monogrammed G. B. "Gerda," said Fru Bojesen, "is my name." She stood there, solemn, the brushes in her hands lifted, as if she were to perform magic. "Please, sit," she said. "No, not in front of the mirror. Sit here by the window, breathe the soft green of the trees, fill yourself with summer. Isn't the air like a caress? Close your eyes, my dear, relax. Think of nothing . . . nothing at all." Her hands slid over Sybil's face, softly closing her eyelids, smoothing back the hair from her forehead, gathering it, letting go, while Sybil's head swung from side to side, and repeating in her gentle, motherly, dumpling-swallowing voice as soporific as the strokes from the brushes: "Yes, yes . . . Just so . . . ja, ja. We shall do it every night . . . every night while you are here."

"Valdemar," cried Thora.

Sybil jerked her head up. "What is that?"

Calmly, Fru Bojesen walked around Sybil's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chair and leaned out the window. "Ah, there he is, our Palle. Come and see."

"Who? Where?"

"Look, that dark bird with the long red beak, isn't he a beauty? That is our Palle, a mynah bird."

"A bird? But didn't —"

"Yes, he will say the funniest things. We have had him for years. We love him. He likes the green freedom of our garden so much, but you will meet him inside the house as well. You never know where you'll meet him next."

"He really talks?"

"Yes, and rather too much. It is a comfort to know that he speaks only Danish. He has a satirist's ear and reproduces our voice with — shall we say, a little malice? One of his favorite impersonations is of me when I am admonishing my husband for taking too much of the gravy when he is supposed to be dieting. And Berthe scolding Thora for *not* eating enough."

"What is your husband's name, Fru Bojesen?"

"Mogens."

But the ceremony of brushing hair was now disrupted. Sybil's hair crackled with electricity and she tried smoothing it down.

"Will you come and sit with us in the living room for a while? Please, don't put up your hair, it's lovely just as it is. We'll like looking at it, both Mogens and I," said Fru Bojesen.

"Thank you. I'll join you in a minute."

The evening had grown chilly, and Sybil pulled a long pink shaggy thing over her dress — her mother's acquisition on one of her endless safaris through New York's boutiques.

What she really would have liked to do was to take a walk through the city at night, but there she was, landed, far from a swan's nest, in a respectable Danish middle-class home and, at least, the first night she had to go and sit with them and yawn in Danish-American togetherness. Herr and Fru Bojesen certainly looked as if they had yawned themselves apart from each other a long, long time ago.

Sybil slipped out of her room and onto the landing. Her soft flat shoes made no sound. She walked across to the last door behind which lay the second guest room, unoccupied. She pressed the door handle, and the room opened quietly. Here, too, the smell of floor wax prevailed, and the bed was neatly made. A student's cap of white velvet, with a red and black ribbon, was hanging on the wall. A shelf of books was freshly dusted. Yet no one lived here, as they said.

Suddenly Sybil felt like a fool. If someone had entered the room after her and asked what she was looking for, what could she have said? That she didn't know? But did she? For all she knew, Valdemar might be the neighbor's cat. Or a passing tourist whose name Thora once had sobbed out — but not because he broke her heart, or bones. He might have been trampling a rare flower in the garden — one that bloomed once in five years?

Mornings at Villa Svanerede began with Palle the Bird shouting incomprehensible orders, Herr Bojesen's exploding hayfever sneezes, thunderous rivers rushing through the plumbing system, and old Berthe carrying into the dining room Braendende Kaerlighed — a steaming casserolle of creamed potatoes with bacon strips and onion rings. The dish was called Burning Love, explained Fru Bojesen, and because of the family's affection for Berthe they all had been obliged, for years, to take a bite of it each morning, so as not to offend the good soul.

Thora alone refused, stirring moodily her cup of black coffee. Sybil seldom heard her say anything beyond "Ja," or, more often, the negative "Nej." Perhaps daily practice of mimicry had made words seem superfluous to her. But then, neither did Herr Bojesen speak much. He gave Sybil his terrible wink, his wife a peck on the cheek, and took off in a gray Volvo. Fru Bojesen strolled, with books under her arm (she read Colette in Danish, "Chéri," and something called "Letsinding uskyld") to the hammock in the garden where she spent the day reading and shelling nuts for three red squirrels. Thora, after one last smouldering look around the table, buttoned herself into a masculine raincoat, its belt wrapped twice around her breakable waist, and walked down the road to the street-car stop, heading, probably, for the rehearsal of a new pantomime play.

Sybil rented a bicycle and pedaled about the island city. Every day the sun shone, every day day some rain fell, and she got all the rainbows she wanted. She wandered through parks and lay on beaches until her body became golden and salty as a peanut. She took a trip to the harbor in a boat low and flat as a flounder, to wave at ships going to America. She had no wish to leave. Once she went to Tivoli and, feeling lonely in the crowd, bought herself a balloon. But she missed the evening performance at the Peacock Theatre — the pantomime players had left the stage when she thought of it,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and a ballet was given later. Thora seemed to come last in her thoughts, long after Valdemar who was no one. Sometimes Sybil found herself, on the beach, writing in the sand, "Valdemar?" She traced, with one finger, a man's body in the sand, long and thin, his face hidden under a student's cap, as if from too much sun. She lay down next to him and smiled back at people who smiled, passing her. "Valdemar," she explained to a child who stopped, thumb in mouth, to stare at her drawing. And the child nodded gravely.

There were moments, as at dinner table, when the Bojesens bent over their plates and their six eyes were averted, when Sybil felt tempted to ask them, simply, who Valdemar was. But it would not have been polite. She must seem funny to them in many ways, without knowing it, because they used to study her. Their eyes would follow her as she moved among them, ate with them, drank their daily offering of cherry brandy, tried to teach the mynah some English, played abridged Gershwin on the piano. They watched her with friendliness, but also as though somewhere about the house there were a secret trap into which she, as an American, or, perhaps, merely as Sybil, was sure sooner or later to fall — and they waited.

Sybil wrote to the dottiest friend in her address book: "They are going to dispose of me, as they have of Valdemar."

She laughed out loud, carried the envelope to the yellow mail box at the corner and, on her way back, without really giving it a thought, paused at the door of the unoccupied guest room. Well, why not? She opened the door and went straight to the wall where the student's cap was hanging, took it off the nail, and there, on the leather band inside, dark from wear and perspiration, in dim gold lettering were the initials, "V. V."

"Now the madness has caught up with me," she thought, "the Nordic madness for which I crossed the ocean!"

The cap was cool and soft in her hands. Regretfully, she put it back on the nail.

One day of uncommon, un-Danish heat — the mercury rose to 25 degrees Centigrade and stayed there for five sun-baked hours — Sybil came back from Bellevue beach exhausted. She meant to write her mother, but sleepiness trickled sweetly through her limbs and shut her eyes. Sprawled in her linen dress across her bed, she drowsed until a shrill sound cut the afternoon to pieces. She sat up and it kept ringing, the telephone, and no one answered it.

If only the noise would stop. But no one seemed to care — not Berthe among her copper pots in the kitchen, making chervil soup and Frikadeller; not Fru Bojesen in her hammock, dozing perhaps under an open book on her face. Or were they? Where was everybody? Sybil staggered to her feet and out of her room into the passage.

"Don't go," someone said. Thora, leaning in a doorway, slender, melting, brooding Thora, lost, as she seemed to the world, now in a loose white robe, winding the ends of a long blue sash round and round her fingers. The sunshine in the room behind crowned her with a halo, Saint Thora.

"The telephone," Sybil said.

"Let's not answer. Anyway, they are all gone."

"Gone?" Sybil asked, and the ringing ceased then.

"My sister went with Mogens to the office. His English-speaking secretary reported sick today. And Berthe . . . this is her afternoon off. She went to Hellerup, to help her daughter with the children."

"Well then . . . Now it's too late anyhow."

"Too late? Did you expect a call?"

"No."

"No one is calling me either. This is my room, won't you come in for a moment?"

Sybil had expected to see the typical room of an actress — walls covered with Thora's different faces, mementos of her roles on the stage, and roles in life. But there were only two, at the head of her bed, unsigned photographs of the two greatest living mimes, Charlie Chaplin and Marcel Marceau. The walls were bare and white, the bed, also white, stood squarely in the room. On the hard wood floor there was only sunshine.

Thora fetched two pillows from the bed and tossed them onto the floor. "Let's sit in the sun, I can't get warm enough, ever. And I don't become tanned. Sometimes I think I'm a creature — well, something like a mermaid. You have read Andersen, haven't you?"

"Of course." Dropping on her pillow, Sybil found herself facing an open door — it led from Thora's room to the second guest room. She could see the student's cap hanging on the wall. Why had Thora opened the door?

"A drink?" said Thora. "You are a visitor, you know. Long awaited, too." She went to a closet and brought a bottle and glasses. "Not

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cherry Heering though . . . This is French cognac. I keep it secret, because my sister wouldn't approve of my solitary drinking. I am twenty-three, but she goes on watching me. She doesn't want me to become involved with our guests. She thinks I would bother them."

"Oh no, why should Fru Bojesen think that?"

"Let's not tell her, anyway. It will be another secret."

Sybil laughed, but Thora's dark eyes under her slanted eyebrows observed her with the same serious expression as over the family dining table mornings and evenings. She was squatting now on the pillow on the floor, her knees sticking out pink beneath the loose white gown. She lifted her glass, "Skaal!"

"Cheers," said Sybil.

Throwing back her head, Thora put the glass to her lips, her long white throat gulping the golden drink as if it were liquid sunshine of which she couldn't get enough. "Cheers," she said, "that sounds nice. But I am not a cheerful person."

"No," said Sybil. "You are . . . rather poetic. Just now you reminded me of a swan."

"The only swan here is one made of Royal porcelain. It stands on my sister's chest of drawers in her bedroom. Do you know about swans?"

"How do you mean?"

"Have you ever seen a swan walk?"

Sybil twirled her glass which stood in front of her on the floor. It was still almost full, and she felt awkward about it, as she felt awkward about Thora's question. "I think swans are the most exquisite creatures," she said. "But I know, too, that swans are supposed to be clumsy on the ground, if that's what you mean. But I'd rather not — not see them, not know."

"And about people? Don't you want to know about people either, the good and the bad together? Everything?"

"I guess I do," said Sybil, "yes."

"Well, men are very much like swans. One should see them only from afar, gliding by . . . But what about your drink? You've barely taken a sip. The first glass must be emptied to the bottom. Only then one can begin to experience the delight of it. I do need another one. Didn't I tell you — I can't have enough warmth. Only when I am warm I get a feeling of what life should be."

"What should it be?"

"Oh — gentleness, love, friendship . . . another understanding person."

"A man?"

"Why should it be a man? Have you found one, found *the* man?"

"No," said Sybil, "no." With both hands lifting her glass, she drank half of it, and burned.

"I see," said Thora, watching her. "But you still hope. The search is going on. For the man . . . But what man? What should he be like, this man?" Her voice sounded angry.

"I don't know."

"Yes, you do. You are looking for the prince — the one we were brought up to believe in, as little girls. Where is he then, this prince, and this kingdom in which you are to live forever after happily?"

"I suppose one knows when one meets him . . . I don't mean a prince, of course, and all that. But, simply, love."

"Love?" Thora laughed. "I perform it every night, this love. Or rather, the gestures of love. With men, on stage. The sorrow, the gaiety, the despair that love is said to be. And to me it is all nothing but a comedy."

"But in life —"

"In life men are not called the names which, in the comedia dell'arte, so simplify all matters — that is about the only difference. On stage, we know what to expect. The Pierrot, who is always in love, suffering, really a simpleton with a clown's face . . . the Harlequin, who is the same, only more handsome, and therefore gets the Columbine. They are young men, but as they get older, they turn into Pantalone, the vicious old fool, with slippers and spectacles. Just as in life. More awful, more unaesthetical in life, perhaps. They snore when they sleep, and yawn and sneeze and burp when they're awake."

"Then you've never loved a man?" asked Sybil.

The silence between them quivered in the sun that fell from the wide window on the two young women on the floor. Thora's eyebrows twisted about vertically — when her face had lost its calm, her mimicry became exaggerated, as in pantomime.

"It could not last," she said slowly. She gazed at the open door of the other room, her mouth pressed to the rim of her glass, open and flat, looking like a wound.

"And," said Sybil timidly, "he . . .?"

"He's left something behind. Look at the student's cap on the wall in the other room."

"Valdemar?"

"Valdemar. Yes, you must have heard his name — it echoes from every tree in the garden, doesn't it? Valdemar . . . The man, the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unique man, or so I thought. I keep his cap there on the wall to remind me . . ."

"Remind you . . . of what?"

"To remind me to hate him. To hate men."

"But why?"

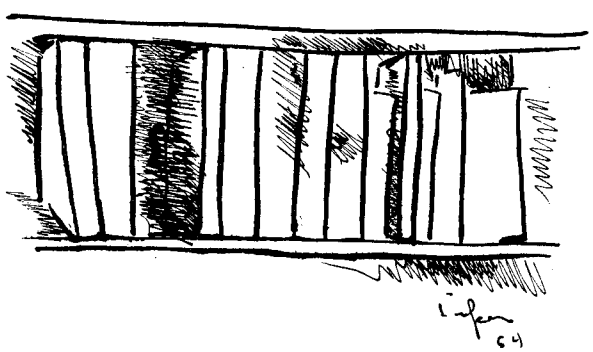
"Because he wasn't unique. He turned out to be like any other man. Worse, perhaps, in a different way. Aesthetical always, yes . . . But he didn't understand. . . ."

"What was he like before . . . before you started hating him? Please, tell me," said Sybil.

"Like a boy. His body, his face — perfect harmony. He came here as my sister's tenant, you see. He occupied that room next to mine . . ." Her face softened. "He used to read late into the night, every night . . ."

"Yes?" said Sybil, trying to repress her excitement.

"I would see the light under his door, while lying in bed and trying to read myself. He had



a cough, a nervous cough. And then, one night I went down to the kitchen, got a jar of lime-blossom honey, and a spoon. It was past midnight, I think. I knocked at the door between our rooms, and he came and tried to open it, but of course Berthe had locked it. We talked through the door, and then I tiptoed out into the hall and used the other door to his room which he opened for me quietly. And so it all began, with a spoonful of honey for his cough."

"So you were happy then?"

"Yes, I think we were. I was. The door played a part in it. I would press close to the door, and he would be on the other side, doing the same, and we talked to each other, and laughed, and I wondered where his mouth was and kissed that place, and it was terribly exciting. We made a game of it. But later, of course, we got the key — and then it was different, more like man and wife, perhaps. But still exciting. Especially on the days when he stayed home from the university, the days when we knew nobody would be at home. Until one day —" Thora reached for the cognac bottle. "Your glass is empty. Let me fill it up."

"I am not used to . . . to straight drinking," said Sybil, but she kept holding her glass still, while Thora poured. "What happened? What happened to Valdemar?"

"Valdemar? Yes, whatever happened, it did happen to Valdemar." Thora's eyes narrowed while she drank her glass to the bottom. "His love — Valdemar's love stopped."

"But love doesn't stop suddenly."

"Whatever happened, came suddenly. One evening late, after I had returned from the theatre. He was here, in my room. We opened a bottle of cognac and got quite drunk, but gaily, as at a party. He said he had never met anyone like me. And I — I think I said that he certainly hadn't, and that there was more he should know about me, still more surprises. "Have you stolen diamonds?" he asked. And I told him about Hanne, the girl I met at the ballet school, and how happy we had been together, until Karen became interested in her. And Karen was so much more experienced than I, also older, and already a well-known dancer. Hanne just couldn't help being attracted to her . . ." Remembering, Thora gripped her arms and, musingly, rocked to and fro.

"But Valdemar? What did Valdemar do?"

"Oh, Valdemar seemed fascinated. He wanted details, more and more of them. He watched my every movement, my every word. He rested on his elbow in my bed, and his eyes — they were set deep in his face, very melancholy — his eyes were like two burning holes. It was dark in the room, and there was a star in the window, terribly bright. And we talked and talked. I said things that weren't even true — just to be interesting to him, to fascinate him more, to be unique, to be the girl, in Valdemar's eyes, like nobody else. I fell asleep happily, because now we were not only lovers, but friends, true friends as well. Can you understand that?"

Sybil nodded, thinking of Valdemar's burning, deep-set eyes. She saw him, lying there on Thora's bed, fascinated and shocked and filling up with melancholy.

"Yes, I can understand," she said.

"Next morning, when I woke, I stretched my arm across the bed, to touch Valdemar. He wasn't there. I tried to move, but somehow couldn't. Then I saw my feet — Valdemar had bound my feet together — bound them with this blue sash, lightly, of course, in jest . . . I thought. I called his name, for the door to his room was open. Then I freed my feet and ran into his room and saw that it was empty. Or almost. Most of his belongings were gone, ex-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cept some books, and the student's cap on the wall. That was last summer, and he never came back."

Thora poured herself another glass. "It wasn't real," she said. "It was a mistake."

"It must happen again," said Sybil. "You'll meet someone, and it will happen again. Love, I mean. With another man."

"You child," said Thora, "you still hope. I've learned enough about men."

"I'm sorry," said Sybil.

"Don't be sorry. I wouldn't want it to happen. Not any more."

The moment Sybil had said she was sorry she wasn't. Hers had been an automatic, polite reaction. She couldn't care less what happened to Thora. Oh, Valdemar, she thought, Valdemar . . . "Have you stolen diamonds?" he had asked Thora. If she, Sybil, only had met someone like Valdemar! Thinking of him, she felt pain — the pain of longing that would never be stilled. Bitterly, she turned to Thora. "You *are* a mermaid," said Sybil, "you are . . ."

Thora's eyes widened with delight. "Yes?" she said, "yes?" When Sybil gazed at her, wordlessly, Thora watched her with slow, smiling eyes. "What lovely arms you have, Sybil. Give me your hand . . . please." She reached out for Sybil's hand and laid it softly against her face. "Understanding warmth . . . Sometimes that is enough."

Before Sybil could withdraw her hand, Fru Bojesen opened the door and stood there, prim in a gray silk suit, staring at the two young women sitting on the floor, the half-filled glasses between them. Her face had lost its amused, slightly superior look. She was a gray, elderly, miserable woman under the small straw hat with the frivolous yellow rose. Now it was Thora who lifted her eyes to her sister quizzically. "Well, Gerda?" But she released Sybil from her grasp.

Fru Bojesen disregarded Thora. In a hurry that was comical, she rushed into the room and fell on her plump knees between her sister and her guest. "Are you all right?" she said to Sybil. "Are you all right, my child?" She touched Sybil's arm. "Oh, I should never have left you alone . . . Are you all right?"

"Control yourself," said Thora, triumphantly.

"I'm all right," said Sybil. "Fru Bojesen, I'm all right."

"It should not have happened!" cried Fru Bojesen in a weak, gray voice.

"But please, Fru Bojesen —"

"What did she tell you? What did she — do?"

"Calm down, Gerda," said Thora. "Have a glass of cognac."

But Fru Bojesen paid no attention to her. Her eyes did not leave Sybil's face, probing, searching her features for some horrible sign she seemed to be expecting. "I must know! You can tell me, Sybil! What happened?" she sat back on her legs, as if she were one of the interrupted party, and clasped her hands. And slowly, in a low voice, she said: "She touched you."

"No," said Sibyl, "really —"

Fru Bojesen stared past her. The full brightness from the window fell into her face. She closed her eyes, "And I — I only brushed your beautiful hair."

Sybil rose to her feet. She longed to run — from Fru Bojesen's distress, Thora's hand that slithered up the cognac bottle, from her own sudden nausea. But "Valdemar," she said, "oh, Valdemar!" And then Sibyl turned and rushed out of the room and down the stairs and out into the garden and along the gravel path. Movement was what she needed, movement. "I can't run away," she told herself, while running. "I can't do that.

Herr Bojesen, having parked his car, came through the gate. Now he would give her his dreadful wink and pass.

Instead, seeing her face, he stopped.

Sybil stood there, in her crumpled linen dress, her hair loose around her shoulders. "My eyes," she thought, "what does he read in my eyes?"

"Excuse me," she said. But Herr Bojesen did not move out of her way. His pink face, she noticed for the first time, was inscribed with many tiny lines. Thora's Pantalone, the image of the old man, the burping, snoring, yawning body which so repulsed Thora.

"But I like him," thought Sybil, "I do!"

He took her elbow — lightly, timidly — and turned the girl back towards the house. Together they walked the path and entered the hall as Fru Bojensen descended the stairs. She stopped halfway and watched them come in. She had removed her hat and held it now in front of her, the yellow rose dangling over her stomach. She looked almost dignified again.

"Kunne vi have en Kop dejlig varm Kaffe?" said Herr Bojesen, and Sybil understood that he was asking for coffee.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His wife stared at him, then she nodded and went about laying out three cups and saucers and making coffee. After a while, Herr Bojesen unfolded his paper, and Fru Bojesen brought from the kitchen the cold cuts and the potato salad and the pickled cucumber slices which Berthe had left them on a tray. But only Herr Bojesen ate.

Thora did not come down until much later, when her light quick step was heard in the hall, as she left for her evening performance at the Peacock Theatre.

Sybil, in her room, wrote to her mother: "I promised to tell you all about the swans at Villa Swan's Nest. There was one — a wild swan, but he has fled. His name was Valdemar. I also want to flee. I am revolted, and sad, too. I wish it hadn't happened . . ."

She tore the sheet to bits. Her mother with the frightened eyebrows . . . Never had they been further apart.

She chose a colorful postcard — the Royal guards marching in the Amalienborg courtyard. "Having fun," she wrote. "Now to Oslo, for more. Greetings from the King and the princesses."

She glanced out the window, and Palle the Bird was sitting in the birchtree. She opened the window wide and leaned out. The evening air touched her face like a silk scarf.

"Will you call Sybil when I'm gone?"

But the bird flew away, its beak a red missile in the dusk.

There was not much to pack. She was soon ready, leaving Copenhagen without souvenirs. What would she like to take? A baker's golden pretzel sign. A tattoo from a seamen's place at Nyhavn. A fishwife's glove sequined with scales. Barrels, barrels full of salty air.

Downstairs, Fru Bojesen began to play the piano — one of Grieg's lyric pieces. She sped away with it, and Herr Bojesen applauded.

"To the happy couple!" said Sybil, quoting from *The Threepenny Opera,* and raising the empty tumbler which had held her toothbrush.

Then she opened the door, ran into Valdemar's room and fetched his cap.

THE ELEGANT HOME

Swedish silver —
The best Scandinavian breasts.

David Ray

THE GREA

Allan C. Brownfeld

". . . It never rained till after sundown
By Eight A.M. the morning fog had flown,
There's a legal limit to the snow here . . .
In Camelot."

(From Lerner and Loewe)

The advent of "The Great Society" greets conservatives at a time when their demise has been proclaimed, their repudiation ratified, and with their obsolescence the subject of repeated acclamation. Any opposition to Mr. Johnson, it has been said, is not only futile as a result of his party's dominance in the Congress, but also violates our new-found "consensus." It flies in the face of Mr. Johnson's "mandate," and if conservatives do persist in opposition, it is a sign of their failure to understand the dynamics of modern-day America.

This kind of idea rests upon several major assumptions. The first of these is that conservatism itself was the loser in the 1964 election, and that Barry Goldwater's defeat was neither political nor personal, but was a defeat for a philosophy of government once prevalent, but now outdated. The second assumption is that Mr. Johnson's election was a mandate for a specific approach to government, an approach to be embodied in the President's program for a "Great Society."

Before approaching these major assumptions, both of which conservatives dispute, it might be interesting to consider the very terminology of "The Great Society." Greatness, after all, is not something which a group of men at a given time and in a particular place may achieve by talking about it. Greatness is a quality possessed by men who never claim it, a virtue which resides in the very nature of things and not simply in their explication. If we have a "Great Society" in America today, or if we are going to have one in the future, it will not be as a result of talking about it.

Many years ago Epictetus stated the follow-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SOCIETY: Conservative View

ing in his *Discourses:* "Nothing great comes into being all at once; not even the grape or the fig. If you say to me now, 'I want a fig,' I shall answer, 'That requires time.' Let the tree blossom first, then put forth its fruit, and finally let the fruit ripen."

Lyndon Johnson, however, tells us that his election will result in the creation of a "great society." It is, he says, his "vision" for America.

When Lyndon Johnson speaks of his proposed "Great Society," he is not speaking of the kind of society which past generations of Americans have considered an admirable one. In advocating "greatness" as merely a form of security and of material well-being he is turning his back on that part of the American tradition which holds that men do not live by bread alone.

He has abandoned the idea that the function of government is to protect the liberty of the individual citizen and has accepted instead the view that the role of government is to control all aspects of the lives of all citizens. Such a government seeks to rule totally, and, although its advocates tell us that such rule is "in our own good," it becomes totalitarian nevertheless. Totalitarianism, after all, means to rule totally.

If we are to understand a real concept of greatness in terms of our own political tradition, we must ask ourselves several questions. One of the first of these is this: What shall be the role of Government in a free society?

Western civilization has wrestled with this problem for centuries, and until recent times we in America thought that we had profited from this ancient search. Lyndon Johnson represents that viewpoint which has abandoned the old answers. In place of them he has not substituted new answers, but has re-phrased what until recently we had considered ancient sophistry.

The history of the Western world has moved from tyranny to democracy and back to tyranny again. The French Revolution is a modern example of Plato's hierarchical estimation of the worth of various political systems. Mass democracy, he predicted, would of necessity develop into tyranny, just as "liberty, equality, and fraternity" ended at the guillotine and the Reign of Terror.

The drafters of the Constitution were aware of these dangers. They were unwilling to create a nation in which the means of tyranny would simply be shifted from the hands of the Crown to the hands of a popular majority. It was the means of tyranny in any form which they sought to destroy. The men who fought in the Revolution fought not for power, but for "liberty or death." It is "sophisticated" to discuss the American Revolution in psychological and sociological terms and call it a "revolution of businessmen," of men concerned with their profits and not their freedom. This crucifies history at the altar of economic determinism and obliterates the simple truth of our history — that what was sought was liberty.

To insure real freedom, power in society should be diffused in the hands of many and not centered in the hands of the few. Therefore, the national government was given specific areas of jurisdiction — raising an army, coining money, conducting foreign affairs. Those rights not given to the national government or denied to the states remained with the states themselves. In addition, the Bill of Rights withdrew some subjects from the authority of any government — religion, free speech, press, and assembly.

If we had a mass democracy, then 51 per cent of the people could vote to eliminate the free speech of the other 49 per cent. This kind of government was feared and a Constitutional Republic and a representative and limited democracy were created instead. The liberty of the citizen was to be found in no whim of the majority but in the clear limits written into the law.

But today the national government is in the fields of health, education, agriculture, and welfare. Individuals, whether they want to or not,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are compelled to pay social security taxes "for their own good." Modern liberals have forgotten the warning of John Stuart Mill, a liberal of another day, that "imposed good is as bad as imposed evil." Our tax structure is used to redistribute wealth, no longer allowing individuals to profit from the fruits of their labor. Assaults are being made upon property rights, telling businessmen with whom they must deal under the amorphous name of the "interstate commerce clause." Columnist Arthur Krock recently called this general trend "the twilight of private property rights."

It is this liberal approach to government which Lyndon Johnson has accepted. And it is by courting the favor of many groups, by promising them handouts and government benefits, that he seeks to achieve "greatness." By having the government take over from the individual the responsibility for his wealth, his culture, his rapid-transit travel, and his view of our natural beauty, Mr. Johnson seeks to relieve us of our own need for decision-making. It is, however, the right to make our own decisions which makes us free, and in the sense that our decision-making power has been transferred to the government, so also has our essential liberty.

Mr. Johnson and his friends also talk a great deal about "equality." They tell us that in "The Great Society" all men will be equal.

Not forgetting that although men are fully equal before God, and should every place be made equal before the law, it is a serious contradiction to speak of both total equality and real liberty.

Discussing the claim to total equality in *The Screwtape Letters,* C. S. Lewis has written the following: ". . . No man who says 'I'm as good as you' believes it. He would not say it if he did. The St. Bernard never says it to the toy dog, nor the scholar to the dunce, nor the employable to the bum, nor the pretty woman to the plain. The claim to equality, outside of the strictly political field, is made only by those who feel themselves in some way inferior. What it expresses is precisely the itching, smarting, writhing awareness of an inferiority which he refuses to accept . . . and therefore resents. Yes, and therefore resents every kind of superiority in others; denigrates it; wishes its annihilation. Presently he suspects every mere difference of being a claim to superiority. No one must be different from himself in voice, clothes, manners, recreations, choice of food . . . 'They've no business being different, it's undemocratic.' "

If Mr. Johnson introduces "real equality" to society, as he states that he will do, it will be an equality on the lowest possible level. It will be an equality of bland mediocrity, of an end to uniqueness, and perhaps it will also place on the level of servility those who once objected to being beneath another man. Now it will be the yoke of the state which all will be equally beneath.

W. S. Gilbert, in *The Gondoliers,* presented a lyric expressing this idea:

> "In short, whoever you may be
> To this conclusion you'll agree
> When everyone is somebody
> Then no one's anybody."

The equality we have always sought in America has been the equal opportunity to do unequal things. How many of us want to be simply the same as everyone else? Robbed of our individuality we would find ourselves mere cogs in the machinery of an all-powerful state, and not in possession of the very dignity which makes men human. Simply put, are we a little lower than the angels because we are men, or are we mere animal subjects for the whims of others as a result of what we had previously considered our humanity?

The conclusion of Lyndon Johnson and those who now hope to create an allegedly "Great Society" is that men should, in fact, be alike — alike not only in opportunity but in actual condition. Not only are they willing and eager to eliminate such ancient rights as that of dominion over private property but are further willing to pattern each of our lives after their own master plan.

Nothing new was really embodied in Mr. Johnson's State of the Union address. He called for an end to right-to-work laws, and an even more powerful labor organization. Workers are to be deprived of any choice concerning whether or not they desire to join a labor organization. In "The Great Society" such decision-making is no longer necessary. Mr. Johnson called for a government program of medical care, predicted an end to poverty, urged a new railroad from Washington to Boston, said he would clean the Potomac River, and provide federal aid to public and parochial schools if only the students are poor enough. He did not mention the war in Viet Nam, the burning of American libraries in Egypt and Indonesia, the unbalanced budget, the growing disrespect for law at home and for America

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abroad. He was concerned with the private vision of greatness, and anything from without which might blur it was conveniently ignored.

Discussing Mr. Johnson's program, William F. Buckley, Jr., wrote the following: ". . . President Johnson's Great Society doesn't exist and never will, first because he has no clear idea what it is, and second because his vague gropings are Utopian and therefore impossible. But this does not mean that his endless speeches, though irrelevant, are insignificant, or without effect. They signify the largely unquestioned assumption that the coercive power of government is capable of reforming a people who have gone astray; but to the extent that the people look to government for improvement in their individual conditions, they feel no internal restraint upon their going further astray while they wait for Godot. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some are utterly incapable of having greatness thrust upon them."

Even those liberals who agree with the sentiment of an all-powerful national government, sense the essential weakness of Mr. Johnson's own approach. New York *Post* columnist Max Lerner made this point: "The State of the Union Address won our assent because we were wholly ripe for it — and Johnson had helped make us ripe. But it was full of worn and weary phrases. Its key concept of the Great Society has never been thought through, either by Johnson or — as far as we know — by anyone around him. Nothing in the speech, in word or idea, left a scar."

Let us consider, at this point, the assumption that the defeat of Barry Goldwater in 1964 was, in fact, a repudiation of conservatism.

Early in the Presidential campaign columnist Roscoe Drummond pointed out that the campaign had departed from its stated course. He wrote: "The irony of the Goldwater candidacy is that he has embroiled it in two over-powering issues which are not a part of conservative doctrine. If Senator Goldwater is defeated, it will look like a body blow to conservatism, but in reality the controlling reasons will have little, if anything, to do with true conservatism."

In its endorsement of President Johnson the Washington *Daily News* said that it was Mr. Johnson who was really the conservative. In an editorial entitled "LBJ Can Be Called a Conservative" the paper stated: "Senator Goldwater is generally regarded as a spokesman for the theory of conservatism. But he does not have much of a record of accomplishment for conservatism. His personality and temperament, while attractive, are not such that, if elected, he would be likely to achieve much success in leading the Democratic Congress, which we are almost certain to have, in the direction of conservatism. Lyndon Johnson is known by the liberal Democrats as one of them — but you have to say 'conservative liberal' to describe him . . ." Here Mr. Goldwater was criticized for his temperament, not for his policies. He was considered *personally* inadequate for the job, and Mr. Johnson was endorsed not because he was a liberal, but because he was not!

Speaking in Albuquerque, New Mexico, a week before the election President Johnson presented his own summation of what the issues really were in the campaign. He stated: "The stakes in this election are success — and survival. The issues are recklessness and responsibility . . . The risk is too great." Here we see that even President Johnson urged voters to reject his opponent not because he was a conservative, and not because he had advocated policies which might be incorrect, but because he was *personally* reckless.

In summing up its view of the campaign issues the New York *Times* called attention to the fact that personalities and not issues were becoming the major theme of the election debate. The *Times*, on the eve of the election, said the following: "Barry Goldwater built his campaign around the theme that he was offering the voters a 'choice, not an echo.' Yet the choice, for many voters, appears to have centered on the personality and character of the Senator himself. They seem to have been asking themselves what kind of President Barry Goldwater would be, rather than what might be wrong with President Johnson. Thus, insofar as concrete issues have been defined in the campaign, they have developed largely from Mr. Goldwater's broad and free-swinging attacks . . ."

Assessing the failure of the campaign to provide choice long called for by conservatives, *Time* magazine had this to say: "The 1964 Presidential campaign has been one of the most disappointing ever. It was going to be a confrontation between opposing philosophies; it turned out to be a wrestling match between volatile personalities. It was going to prove the vital difference between two strong political parties; it has merely shown that one, the G.O.P., is in great need of repair. It was going to pit liberal against conservative; but Lyndon John-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

son has stated very few liberal tenets, and many an American conservative now doubts that Barry Goldwater really speaks his language. It was not going to be a 'me too' campaign: it has turned out to be one in which the principals largely shout 'You're another.' "

It would clearly appear that the 1964 campaign was based not on the conservative-liberal debate many had hoped for but, instead, on more traditional political issues, such as personality and popularity. The campaign arguments themselves were political and not philosophical or ideological.

Barry Goldwater, it seems safe to say, lost not because he was a conservative but because he left himself open to the charge of nuclear irresponsibility. What we had was a vote for experience and against what sounded to many like a hollow call for better morals. Senator Goldwater *himself* became the target, and his policies were rarely discussed, except in an oversimplified manner. Conservatism was not the loser in 1964, because conservatism was never really the issue!

The other major assumption which is incorrect is that Mr. Johnson has a mandate for a particular policy and a particular approach.

The very idea that such a "consensus" exists on questions of policy such as Medicare, poverty, foreign aid, union power, the Supreme Court, and Viet Nam is specious at best. When, for example, have the people expressed their view on such subjects? Was the election of Lyndon Johnson in any way an expression of public opinion on matters of specific answers to specific questions? Mr. Johnson himself said that the major issue of the campaign was that of "responsibility." If this is so, then in what way were the results a consensus on specific questions of policy?

Beyond the fact that no consensus on specifics exists now, or ever has, is the question of ultimate solutions to ultimate problems. To call for a whole nation dedicated to the same approach and philosophy of government is to say that only one *true* solution exists to any given problem. This is dogmatism of the worst kind, for it is not dogmatism about principle only but also about application and approach.

Lyndon Johnson believes that a "national solution" exists for all problems, which means, in effect, that the power of government is unlimited in all areas. In today's world we do not seem concerned with ultimate questions. We do not ask whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, wise or unwise. We ask of a policy — is it popular, is it modern, is it stylish. We must remember that Nazism was stylish in Germany, Castro is popular in Cuba, Khrushchev was modern in the Soviet Union. Style is hardly a test! Popularity and alleged modernity are hardly more accurate as true standards.

Conservative Republicans have an opportunity to maintain in America our traditional view of a two-party system. A political party exists so that it may exercise the function of government when it is called to power by the people. But the people call it to power to lead, and not to follow. If this were not the case then we would be condemning ourselves to rule by the weakest and most dependent members of our society, not by the strongest, most industrious, and most trustworthy. For if leaders merely follow the multitude, their leadership will be subject to the passion of the majority, precisely what we hoped to prevent through the buffer of our Constitution and representative democracy. It has, we must remember, been the philosophy of our country that it was the responsibility of the people to support the government, not that of the government to support the people.

A political party which is based on a close appraisal of the public opinion polls will be of value only so long as the polls remain constant. As the people change their minds they will rebel against a leader as fickle as they. Though they privately cast aside a past heresy, those who publicly endorse it, must be publicly cast aside.

In this spirit, conservatives will persist in challenging the basic assumptions of the "Great Society." They will reject the suggestion that the philosophy of government accepted by a political party may change with each election, for this implies no level of responsibility on the part of its leaders but is, instead, a simple following of temporary majority opinion. The true majority, according to Edmund Burke, is the total of all those who have gone before, all those who are yet to come, as well as all of those alive today.

It is to this majority that conservatives seek to appeal, and the truths enunciated by conservatives in criticism of the "Great Society" are historical truths, and not momentary and utopian popularizations. Perhaps we may ride from Boston to Washington in four hours, and the Potomac water may be clear and pure. There may yet be a legal limit to the snow, but conservatives don't think that there ever will.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AN HEIR FOR HOROWITZ

A. Farrell Borenstein

Early that afternoon, Rabbi Nathan Rifkin crept into the cool desolation of his study back of the *shul,* and sat down heavily in his swivel chair. His mouth ached with the aftertaste of the lunch that Ida had set before him — the cold onion soup she served up in triumph every Wednesday, and the cottage cheese salad with the chipped raw vegetables that always made him bilious. In the fullness of time, he, too, had married his own mother. The kitchen was their arena. They scrapped about food; she scolded; he ate with one hand held over his liver. She knew what was good for him; he knew that she knew . . . why should they take so much pleasure in the ill humors of a love now moving into the closing phase of its cycle?

As usual, she had been sewing all morning — the dresses and suits for half the mothers and daughters in the congregation, so they should go in splendor to Rosh Hashanah services. He had long ago given up arguing that it wasn't respectable. Her talents with the needle were beyond dispute. Besides, it kept her out of mischief, especially now that their children were grown and gone.

Ida wore her glasses on a long silver chain around her neck. The constant play of lifting and peering through and dropping them preoccupied her when she wasn't bending over the sewing machine. It kept her from the other vices of her sex — from lingering too long in front of the mirror, or smoking, or stuffing herself with the experiments that browned and bubbled in the oven from morning to sundown.

She was sitting across from him, raising and lowering that second pair of eyes — somehow less threatening to him than the ones that God had given her — when she asked, "Did you hear yet from that magazine?"

Gripping his liver more tightly (he had just bitten into a radish), he told her indignantly, "Please. Not a magazine. Call it a journal, or a review, or a quarterly. Have a little respect."

She reached across the table and helped herself to one of his crackers. Her glasses swung between the fallen splendor of her breasts. She crunched in contentment, her dark glittering eyes fixed critically on his shoulder. He supposed there was dandruff there again, but how many men nearly fifty had hair left at all, even?

"That's the story about the Negroes' doing a kneel-in at the *shul*?"

He put his glass of milk down in temper.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You've got the sensitivity of an elephant. Don't you know a person has feelings?"

She opened her eyes wide in an expression of innocence that maddened him. "What did I say now? Isn't that what the story's about? Didn't you read it out loud to me? Didn't you tell me this is the best one yet? I remember the day you mailed it, you told me it would be the beginning of your whole literary career."

"I still think it'll sell!" he shouted. "How can it miss? It's got all the elements — everything that's at the top of the news today. The South, the minorities working together, the whole background is in it. You can smell the swamps, even. You said so yourself. Tell me, what's missing? It's got humor, it's got suffering, it's got God. It's got irony . . . supreme irony. . . ." He leaned over toward her and demanded, "How can it miss?"

"What am I, the publishers?"

"Don't mock me. My whole life is in this writing." He put down his napkin and spread his hand over it. His head and shoulders were trembling. He had felt, since he got up that morning, that this was the day he would hear from them. This was the second agony of writing. The first was getting it down — whimpering and sighing and laughing out loud to yourself, even crying a little. The second was running to the *shul* and waiting, hiding behind the venetian blinds in the study, for the mailman — waiting, like you were supposed to wait for the Messiah. You go in hard labor, you deliver it up, you stamp it and seal it, shaking with elation and despair, and you send it off. Then in the long silence you wait; you tell yourself, it takes time to read and consider; everybody today thinks he's a Hemingway. At night you lie in bed and argue with the editors. Listen, you tell them, you don't know what it's like down here. I capture the whole feeling of it here — and here — and here. See what I mean? The style . . . I know it's my weak point, but it takes a whole lifetime to know your own language. It plays tricks on you; it dances and sings in your head; and you sit up in bed in the dark, listening . . . you're possessed.

"Your whole life!" Ida shook her head and drew her lips in. "I beg you, Nathan, think what it's doing to you. It all started what, ten, eleven years ago now, when you got that story accepted. It was just a whim you said, to write it down and send it off. What bit you I'll never know. But it's incurable. Year after year you're writing every spare minute. I can't tell you a piece of gossip without you writing it on the napkin. A story, a story, everything's a story. And the harder you try, the less it works. Your whole personality is breaking down —"

"Can I help it if I didn't find myself till I'm older?"

"Aiy, aiy." Ida put her hands up to her cheeks. "Find yourself, and you a rabbi! Listen to me, Nathan. You see my hands? This is what I talk with — the left one, the right one, and the needle. Like a baker with dough. It's my prayer. For you it could never be. Your hands're *schlemazels,* you'll pardon me, please, I don't mean to hurt, we both know it's true. You could never open even a can without slashing both wrists. With you it's all words. But they come from your *mouth*! Remember, you used to explain it to me, the oral tradition? Talk is your genius, *talk*! You think it was a mistake for you to be a rabbi? How many people have you reached with talk, you even know?"

"Sure. Zero."

"All right, go ahead, punish yourself. Here you are in the middle of the desert—Louisiana, U.S.A., helping God knows how many people, stoking the memory of our people like a furnace, it's not enough for you."

"Thanks," he said heavily. "It isn't enough. I discovered another gift in myself. Should I let it rot? All right, tell me nobody wants to hear. Over and over they send me their little rejections. It's not right, they say. Not right for us. Not right! What am I doing, fitting sleeves?"

He scraped his chair back, getting up, and pounded his fists on his temples. "Did I make the system? Did I ask God knows who to be my judges? Is writing like cutting meat or making candlesticks, that I have to have a Ph.D. in English? Who is it out there I have to please?"

"You tell me." She cupped one hand at the edge of the table and swept crumbs into it with the other. "You read every writer's magazine they print. You make lists of magazines — pardon me, reviews. Every time you send something out, you first explain to me why it's going where you send it. You must be doing something wrong! Maybe it's the subject matter. Maybe the whole idea of the *schwarze* in the *shul* with a kneel-in is crazy. Maybe no one wants to hear it. Maybe they don't see the point."

"Maybe they didn't see the point either of a crazy old man riding around with a fat little fellow, hitting windmills with sticks."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"That's a joke?" She lifted her glasses and studied him.

"Sure, a joke." He strode through the kitchen and down the hall to get his jacket. Clucking and sighing, she gathered up the dishes and brought them to the sink. A good wife has to encourage her husband, no matter how wild he gets. Maybe there is such a thing as menopause for men, like Goldie Baum had told her.

"Never mind!" she called out. "There're plenty of writers who don't make it until old age."

"Make it until old age!" he shouted. "Some don't make it until they're dead altogether. And there's a whole Coxey army who don't even make it after that!"

He was standing in the kitchen doorway again — the place he had been standing for years, shouting and waving his hands and analyzing and making prophecies, until he had emptied his breast. But by evening it would be filled up again. He was late. He was always late for everything. She had to shove him out of that doorway. It was like he wanted to put off his work, he was afraid to face it. Maybe that was why he had started all this writing business. His work was driving him crazy. For years he had been telling her it was a mountain of broken threads. Nothing was ever finished or made whole. God pity him. For her it was such satisfaction to cut out a cloth, to fit all the pieces of material together, to use a little imagination here and there, and to see it working out, becoming something that fitted and had a place, and was beautiful to look at. Men suffered, too.

"So?" She turned, lifting her soapy arms and holding them out to him. "What's the answer, Nathan? You'll keep going? Keep writing and suffering and getting rejection slips?"

"No! No, I won't!" He shook his fist heavenward. "It's no good, working it over and over, and hiding it away! It's criminal! I don't believe in that, it's not even moral!"

"Then," she asked quietly, "what happens when *The Kneel-In* comes back? You'll burn it?"

"That's right, I'll burn it!" He was terrifying himself, but she was right, it had to be. "You'll see. I mean what I say. If that story comes back without even a personally written comment, I'll quit. It's the last time, I swear it. The last time."

"I'll call you this afternoon, then, to see what happened."

He stalked through the hallway to the front door, and she ran after him, feeling apprehension and pity. "You sure. . . ." she began timidly.

"When is the last time I made an oath and broke it?"

He went out, slamming the door.

She wanted to call him back, to try to explain why she tormented him into his promise. If only he could see what she saw, that his powers to astound and awake flowed in a current from the top of his head right out of his mouth again. Year after year, he would sit hunched over his desk, trying to summon it up, driven wild by the least sound. Didn't he know it was the silence inside himself that made him so frantic — the silence when he looked at the blank sheet of paper? He couldn't even write a sermon without first talking out loud to God and then grabbing a pencil and writing down what he heard for an answer. Maybe if he could see other writers, talk with them, argue with them, first fill up his ears . . . but where were these other writers? Hiding in a basement some place, God knows where, New York City maybe, or a cottage up in New England, but one thing was sure — most of them must be alone, too. Only maybe they could think just sitting on their tockuses, not like Nathan who could do it only by yelling from the kitchen doorway.

Despite the sweltering heat of early September, the Rabbi was wearing his dress shirt and dark suit to the *shul*. The steering wheel scorched his hands, and the dashboard, dazzling with sunlight, nearly put out his eyes. The car was steaming. He drove with all the windows down, and the damp air washed over him, heavy with the odors from the gas fields and garbage pits, and the fragrance of rotting magnolia blossoms and ligustrum. He drove through the down town area, nearly deserted these past few years. Shopping centers, discount centers, this village and that village, who needs them, the women run to them like they were being chased by mad dogs. One by one the old stores had gone out of business. His head ached, remembering the long recitations of woe from members of his congregation. He had wept and wrung his hands with those who were ruined, and at last a story had been born. *Going Out of Business Sale* he called it. There was a lot of social criticism in it. He had sweated through three drafts. And how many rejections? Ten, or was it eleven? He needed to objectify his characters, they said. Sam Friedman objectified! How can you write a poem on an IBM card?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now he was in the Negro district with its long rows of shacks and dingy stores, teeming with life. He waved, and three dark faces beamed at him, in front of a freshly painted shed. *Wilson's Lawn Service.* Another story. He helped organize it; helped buy the used lawn mowers and clippers and garden tools; got good friends to give them business advice — and then he wrote about it. After the fifth rejection, he put the story away. They probably thought he was a Communist.

What I need to do is stop working on stories and finish a novel, he said loudly. (Few of those who heard him turned to stare; he had been Rabbi in the town for nearly twenty years, and part of his legend was that he talked to himself.) Maybe it's easier to break through with a novel. So who do I think I am, another Malamud? Who needs to hear what I've got to say? So I'm a rabbi, is that so remarkable? So I'm a rabbi in the South, does that mean they should jump through hoops? I fought the good fight, does that make me Ghengis Kahn? I understand Negroes, but Richard Wright understands them better. I've seen misery and glory, but does it come in new shapes and sizes? Enough to be a rabbi, Ida says. All right, Ida, tell me, you know so much, why is it everybody has to have a little madness on the side? One wants to paint, another one does a little singing, another one carves, this one whittles, that one grows a prize chrysanthemum, this one snaps the picture of the year. Used to be, we were just lucky to stay alive, to keep our stomachs half-full and give thanks to God. Now we have to achieve, be a genius at something.

He took his hand from the burning wheel and made a fist and shook it at the sky.

In twenty minutes the mail would be delivered. He opened his jacket and drummed his fingers on the desk. A promise is a promise. Maybe he ought to take to drink, Ida's so anxious to be a reformer. He leaned over and read the scribbling on his calendar. Harold was coming in to talk to him about his daughter, who wrote from college that she was becoming involved with a pre-ministerial student who couldn't make up his mind what sect to choose. Harold had called last night: "Nathan," he cried, "she's always been such a quiet girl, not wild like the others, how can she do this to us?" Mrs. Miller would be calling about what flowers they would have for the services. Mrs. Kaufman was coming by, between appointments to the dentist and the beauty parlor, to make arrangements for the Oneg for their new daughter named—may the God of Abraham and Isaac forgive us — Cynthia Lynn. Miriam Kugel would come by after school to prepare for her *bas mitzva,* now less than a month away. Mrs. Kugel insisted the girl should write her own talk, every last word. The poor child, she was sweet and so kind, but had a head like a sieve. Midway between her lesson, Andrew Dobbs would come in to do the weekly waxing of the Annex floor, smiling and good-natured, but full of more suffering than the story of the flight from Egypt.

He would have to look over his notes for the talk he had promised the Sisterhood that night. They wanted to hear about assimilation, but God forbid he should go too far. Minnie Hirschman had warned him about using strong language to denounce conformity, like he did last year during the five minutes' television time they gave him for Brotherhood Week. Five minutes for Brotherhood, what a story that could make. At five o'clock, Feivel Horowitz was coming by, to talk to him about his son's adoption plans. And on the way home, he had to be sure to stop by at the hospital, to see Herb who had had his hemorrhoids out yester-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

day morning. He shuddered in sympathy, remembering how he had felt two years ago after the same experience.

The telephone rang; it was Mrs. Miller. While he was talking to her, he heard the mailman out on the front porch. He felt panic and dread. *The Kneel-In* could be coming back any day now.

When he went out of his study to get the mail, he heard a rustling near the Ark. He rushed up the *bema,* flung open the doors, and there found the evidence he had feared all month he would find: mice had been scavenging, and had nibbled at the edge of the Torah. *Mice*! he cried, *Mice in the Torah, oh, God, what are you saying to me*? He cupped his hand over his nose and wept like a little boy, choking and sputtering, wept for everything, for the trust that had been violated, for the meaning of everything, *too many meanings, they burst in my head like rockets*, for the ambition that was poisoning him, and for the astonishment in him at the miracle and madness of life . . . for the terrible sweetness of all that he was losing.

Beyond the window in his study, the sunlight was just beginning to wane. On this side of the synagogue was a wide boulevard that cut through the town. At half-past four the traffic began — a procession of workers driving home from the factories; the school playground across the boulevard had been deserted for over an hour. An incandescent light flowed over his desk, his books and papers. Feivel Horowitz had just come in, and was standing with his back to the book shelves, his hands behind his back, his fingers twitching.

"Wun Lee Horowitz," he was saying moodily. "That's who we'll have."

"Stay calm, Feivel. Tell me from the beginning."

Horowitz began to pace, his shining bald pate thrust down at the floor. "First of all, you remember we talked about Jack and Jenny not having any children."

"Talked! We could write an encyclopedia on the subject."

Feivel lifted his right hand for silence. "Just a minute. I have to go through the whole thing, to settle it in my mind. Now, here we are with my only son in the seventh year of his marriage and no babies, granted?"

"Granted." The Rabbi's gaze wandered again to the manila envelope at dead center of his desk. *Not suitable for our purposes,* they said. Maybe he shouldn't try any more Jewish magazines. Maybe it irritated them to hear from rabbis. Maybe they didn't want to hear about Jews altogether.

"Pardon me, but are you paying attention?" Feivel peered at him over the black rims of his glasses.

The Rabbi jumped guiltily. "It's a good marriage," he said.

"It's not a question of that." Feivel stopped pacing and took his glasses off. He fished an enormous handkerchief out of his pocket and set to work shining the lenses. *His age tells in his eyes,* the Rabbi thought sadly. *They sink deeper and deeper into his head. You think the light is coming from them, but it's more and more a trick of the memory.* "She'll be thirty-nine in February. And what happens to me? I filled up my house with girls to have that boy. Now either the name goes with him, or we have Wun Lee."

"What Wun Lee?"

Horowitz sat down beside the desk and spread his hands out, palms up, to show their emptiness. "In the first place," he sang irritably, "we can establish that she thought she had time for babies. Later, she said, first I want to have my fun. Imagine! Also she worried about her figure. Pardon me, but any change could improve it. I mean, she's nice and a good girl, but a pretzel's a pretzel."

"If she isn't past forty, there's still time."

"Time! How much time does it take to make a baby? One minute? Two, maybe?"

"Don't be indecent."

"When the name Horowitz is going down, there's no question of worrying about decency."

"I don't think it can go down so easily." The Rabbi leaned forward and smiled at his friend.

"You can joke." Horowitz turned his hands over and smacked them on the desk. "Besides which, Jack might even change it. He thinks it might help the business. He says it's too hard to spell these days. Horn he likes. You know what I said to him? Wun Lee Horn for a grandson is not my idea of fulfilling his duty!"

"Duty," the Rabbi echoed glumly. Any minute, Ida would be calling.

"For three years, they've been wanting — really wanting. You know all they went through. She saw six or seven gynecologists. One said she's normal; another one said the whole equipment's too small; another one wanted to take it all out; he thought he saw tumors. Another one said it's out of place. In short, they don't agree themselves can she have

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a baby or not." He paused for dramatic emphasis.

"And you know it's not Jack," the Rabbi put in helpfully; Feivel always had to tell the whole *megillah* in sequence.

"This we're sure of," Feivel said proudly. "He had the test, he played with himself in a bottle, and what did they tell him but that he could populate the whole earth."

"Marvelous!" The Rabbi reached for a pencil and began to twirl it in his fingers. "That line is a gem. I've repeated it to myself many times over."

"What's a good line when your whole mortality is at stake," Horowitz sighed. He got up and began to pace again. "All this year they've been talking about adoption. They thought if they adopted one, she might still have her own. It often happens. And if not, they'd still have a baby. What could we lose? So what happens? Here we are in the deep South; the law says you adopt by religion, and where do you find Jewish girls having illegitimate babies?"

"A vicious circle," the Rabbi sighed. Those were always the next words. He stared down at the words he had scribbled on the back of an envelope. The Fear of Mortality. Terrible! He scratched them out and turned around in his chair, asking his friend in a sudden excitement: "Tell me, Feivel, what would it really mean to you to know that the name would continue?"

Horowitz groaned. "How can you ask for philosophy at a time like this? My son wants to change his name; he applied to an international agency in New York for a baby; they offer him a Korean boy, aged six already, and you want to talk philosophy." He brought his hands up and grasped his heart. "I want to know what's in here — in *here*! Am I, after all these years, after what happened to our people, am I a Hitler who looks down on somebody because he's not born like me? Do I want blue eyes and yellow hair and a snow-white face, is that it? Is that why I'm against the idea? I said to my boy, Jack, a Jewish child has enough *tsores* without being a Korean besides, especially down South. This to me is good reasoning. You know what he tells me, this idealist son of mine? I'm a bigot, he says, there's no real love in my heart for him or his wife or the world, I only care about putting on a good show! This from my son who wants to change his name to Horn! We had a fight, Nathan, that was so bad I wanted to kill myself afterward. We almost came to blows. You know how bad a thing like this can get? One night, Jack even told me he asked a psychiatrist about the problem, and the psychiatrist thinks I'm lusting after my own daughter-in-law!"

"This is fantastic!" The Rabbi was writing steadily, now. He had filled half a page; he was hunched over his desk, all attention. "Go on, don't stop now!"

"What's to go on? It's Wun Lee Horn, or I die without an heir!" Horowitz stood over the Rabbi and demanded, "For God's sake, what are you doing, are you a psychiatrist too, now?"

"That's it!" the Rabbi cried out in rapture, "an heir! *An Heir for Horowitz*!"

"Have you got an idea? Horowitz yelled.

"Have I got an idea," the Rabbi said fervently.

By the time Horowitz left, the last rays of the sun were glinting redly on the wooden arms of the swivel chair. The Rabbi reached across his desk to take out the folder of notes he had prepared for the Sisterhood talk. The telephone had been ringing insistently at five-minute intervals. He knew it was Ida, and he knew that she knew that he was still there. He glanced at his watch. It was nearly six. He had to hurry before the hardware stores closed, to buy the mousetrap. Andrew Dobbs was right, you could be humane only up to a point, God's word is sacred.

He got up, stuffing his briefcase with papers, and stopped to read over the notes he had been scribbling so feverishly. The lines were magnificent. Horowitz' performance had never been better. The whole thing was irresistible; who could turn his back on it? The only thing was, the old problem, where do you send it?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books

THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND

Last Exit To Brooklyn. Hubert Selby, Jr. Grove Press, New York, 1964. 304 pp. $5.00.

Sociologists, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists should hail the publication of *Last Exit To Brooklyn* as a dramatized, conglomerate case history of problems which confront them regularly. Penologists will recognize the locale and the characters as the source of most of the populations of their institutions. A host of mentally ill perform in all six sections (or stories). Uniformly ignorant, cruel, egocentric, and without compassion, some are also lazy, addicts, boozers, and dishonest. Included in the cast are muggers, thieves, whores, homosexuals, and fornicators. The scene is a Brooklyn waterfront jungle. The language is lowest common denominator, Vulgar American. With this cast and a vocabulary of short, precise, descriptive, outcast, and familiar words which must have been scraped from the walls of public toilets, Hubert Selby has written a powerful book about pitiable people.

All major incidents involve sex, drink, and violence: the "boys" who hang out at The Greek's café roll service men; the boys torture a transvestite who lusts for one of them; the boys degrade the "girls" at a gay party. Harry beats his wife, fathers maltreat children, wives abandon families, whores roll sailors. The action is vicious, mean, and usually with no obvious motive. The characters are incapable of love, and unloved.

Of the six sections, two are remarkable for detailed characterization and sustained plot: *Strike* and *Landsend*. *Strike* is the story of Harry, who is an overbearing petty tyrant on his job where he is also union representative and is monstrously repellent in his home life. A latent homosexual, Harry moves from unhappy, psuedo-respectability through overt experiences to end as a broken, beaten, bloody blob screaming imprecations at God.

Landsend, the final section, is a panoramic which takes the reader in and out of apartments in a high-rise, low-rent housing unit near the river. *Landsend* is a microcosm of races, creeds, and colors with each person trapped in his own ignorance by his own lust and knowing only his own greed.

Last Exit To Brooklyn is a shattering book. The vocabulary is essential and repugnance is displaced by mammoth pity for the lost and hopeless slumdwellers of all cities. The pity endures. *Last Exit To Brooklyn* cannot be recommended for children or the immature of any age, nor for hypocrites.

Armarius

THE TRASHEDY OF MASE GREER

The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books. Hal Dresner. Simon and Schuster, N.Y. 1965. 192 pp. $3.95.

"Guy LaDouche" is the pen name of one Mase Greer, the author of such best selling pornographic books as *This Flogged Flesh, A Bra Full of Bullets, Bare With Me,* and *Vices of the Vikings,* a historical. *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books* is the book about him, a first novel by a young writer named Hal Dresner. It is not a dirty book. It is meant to be funny — enough so the reader will "devote several hours to wild peals of uninterrupted laughter." Books with such a fanfare rarely fill their billing.

But this *is* a funny book — at times. It is a collection of letters between Greer and his associates: Ben Wink, his publisher; Mike Westlake, his attorney; Dave Noodleman, a friend; and Natalie Bonkers, an old platonic love. The "villians" of the novel are Lt. Commander E. B. Dibbs, USN (Ret.), who is suing Greer for $350,000 dollars for defamation of his daughter's character. She is mentioned in one of Greer's "trashics" by her familiar name (Bibbsy Dibbs), and appears in several lurid scenes faithfully described right down to the trapezoidal birthmark on her posterior. It is all a coincidence. But Dibbs has his lawyers and the F.B.I. on the case, while his friend Dr. Pietro Quiones, who is writing a book called *The Fanciful Child: A Psychiatric Study of Pornographers,* sends Greer a questionnaire which reads in part:

> *IV. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the first word or words that come to mind.*
> *A. My favorite part of the body is the .....*
> *B. Three things I like to do with this part are ..... and ..... and .....*
> *C. My private name for this part is .....*

Greer's favorite part of his body is his head: he uses it to think, see, and hold up hats. His private name for it is "Heady." This is the tool to his pornography. His actual experience doesn't outshine any average male's.

The action of the story — the correspondence between Greer and his prosecutors — begins rather seriously (and slowly), but progresses into good reading as Dibbs is revealed as mildly insane and his lawyers as efficiently incompetent. Greer's friends provide background and insight into the pornographer's character, but their roles in the novel add little interest and less comedy. Greer himself is an ambiguous character: he reaches the extreme in being flippant, philosophical, and corny. While in one letter he exemplifies the character he is set up to be, in the next letter the tone may be so different from all the previous ones that it does not amplify his character but only confuses it. By the end of the novel — which comes as more of a disappointment than the "surprise" it is supposed to be — the reader is left with the thought, "Now what was this Greer like anyway?"

The funniest figures in the book are Eisentraub, the F.B.I. agent; and Crapaud, the sheriff. Both are born comics, so illogical and unreal that they make for the true life and laughter of the book. This is in part provided by the long letters in which they are *described* by Greer to his friends. They have the scenes and dialogue which the others do not have, and it develops them as characters as no amount of "letters" does for the others.

This perhaps is the major criticism that can be applied to Dresner's novel: the form in which he presents

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his story. While the correspondence allows for a large number of characters and implied action expressed in brief sequences, it limits the development of the story as a whole. What is naturally a comic situation, and could be a very funny, laughable book, is regrettably confined by its treatment to mere lightheaded reading.

David Meyer

A CONFEDERATE NOVEL OR COLONEL BOGUS' MARCH

A Confederate General from Big Sur. Richard Brautigan. Grove Press, N.Y., 1964. 159 pp. $3.95.

Dear Brautigan,

Surely, you jest.

If not, then you and Grove Press ought to be more careful about dust-jacket copy. Your book is touted on the back flap as "a highly original use of the novel form in which everything — mood, atmosphere, ideas — are conveyed obliquely, through imaginative imagery." You and I both know that this statement in all its ungrammatical glory is just so much hogwash.

If a novel can be said to have a theme, a plot, and characters, then *A Confederate General* may be mistaken for something else. Or perhaps it really is something else, intentionally. A ramble perhaps. Or a discursive meander *à la* H. G. Wells. For the book is nobody's *story,* is it? Because there is no story in any usual sense of the word; only a series of anecdotes, some well-related and amusing and others awkward and sophomoric. And there are no characters either, just types: Lee Mellon, the beat and bogus general; Elaine, the fair; Elizabeth, ascetic whore; Jonathan Wade, the nut; and the narrator. It's all about as original as a hamburger with onions or the statement on the back flap.

That the book is a "serious portrait of a 'beat' character" is also just a fog of finely pulverized baloney. It is just there, at the point of Lee Mellon's "character," that the book begins to save itself, isn't it? It's the opposite of serious, as I see it. Under cover, you're giving Mellon and the Beats the works. You let your narrator doubt toothless Lee Mellon just often enough to expose Mellon for what he is: a case of irresponsible, jobless, tail-hunting, booze-and-dope-loving, retarded adolescence.

How could your flap-writer miss the fact that the only sympathy you allow us to have for Mellon is the sad affection we feel for a lost adolescence? How could he miss the fact that you have your knife out when you call Mellon "The end product of American spirit, pride and the old know-how"? His Know-How is so infinitesimal that this son of Thoreau and apostle of Big Sur (of life close to Nature) can't hit a rabbit with five shots from a .22. In the ensuing scene, one of the more amusing in the book, he is reduced to bilking two high-school kids out of $6.72 lest he starve.

And all that counterpoint about the Civil War, ". . . the last good time this country ever had."

Rats.

Either you know little of history and war, or you want the narrator to appear as boneheaded as Mellon. Any resemblance between Lee Mellon and his "war with life," and a Confederate General is perfectly forced. The Confederacy fought to maintain the *status quo*; Mellon is fighting against it. Men lost their lives in the Civil War; I'm not convinced that Mellon has *anything* to lose. (He has already lost his teeth before when the book begins.) Finally, whatever glamor attaches itself to Civil War history does so because of the extraordinary courage of responsible men. Mellon's skirmishes are with "rich queers," teen-agers, the mentally ill, books, and booze. General Mellon (and you are a brutal leg-puller in this respect, Brautigan) is really Confederate, that is, phony; a bogus general in a bogus war.

What really saves this book, for me, is your sense of the perfectly ridiculous incident. No. Not your style. Your sense of incident.

The style itself is all right except that it lapses too frequently into stale Hemingway ("Want to put another log on the fire? . . . I think it could use another log. What do you think?") or stale Kerouac ("Like a weird Balboa, Lee Mellon would look for cigarette butts on the shores of the Western World. . . .") It's at its best, of course, when it's least conspicuously poetic: ". . . and the silence in the pond was multiplied by two."

But I can't escape my conviction that it's where the

WHAT CHEKHOV SAID

The sirens scream with hysteria,
"It is rage of which we are dying."
The ambulance wails,
"It is pain that attaches us to the world."
Thin hands streaked with beer-suds,
Give me a whisky,
Give me something to be going on with.

What was it Chekhov said?
"Come to us."
He meant a life of emotion —
A wood of white birch trees
And a field of daisies.
He meant the wings of a butterfly
Making dark lines in the air —

And streets with striped awnings
That snap in the wind,
Sea-walls moving with reflections.
A coal-chute rattles,
A crane clanks,
Smoke drifts over the harbor,
And at night the little cafés go sailing.

Louis Simpson

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OTTERTAIL COUNTY

My cousin, playing my recorder,
bit it like a clarinet
and got the fipple hot and wet.
He told me that, though he adored her

he'd once divorced a girl in Denver
who hadn't told him all about
another hubby: he cut out
but paid the rent (this seemed to lend ver-

acity, as I remember).
It must have all meant something, but
without my maps I can't say what.
I only know it was September

that we'd been on an all-day bender
and fished till dawn, the lake as fat
as grass beneath the boat, and that
he trembled, though the night was tender.

William Brady

incidents are strong in themselves that the style is at its best, even when it *does* get self-consciously poetic. The "gastronomical Hiroshima" of the jack-mackerel supper, for instance. Or the brief essay about the floating population of Mellon's Teeth. None is so right, however, as the chapter entitled "The Rivets in Ecclesiastes." This piece is worthy of you. It would have been worthy of Twain himself.

But there was all too little of this kind of incident in the book as a whole. And short as it was, amusing as it was at its best, I felt I'd been taken at the end. The whole thing hadn't been worth it. I'd just read a Confederate novel.

Yours,
Robert Dana

WHAT HAPPENED IN SAVANNAH?

The Exact and Very Strange Truth. Ben Piazza. Farrar, Strauss and Company, New York, 1964. 326 pp. $4.95.

Alexander Gallanti, twelve years old, is flying from Little Rock, Arkansas, to his brother's home in Savannah. In his care on the flight are his younger brother and sister and his mother, a helpless victim of a crippling stroke. We learn of his early life through a flashback — told partly in third person and partly in first person.

Alexander grew up with his eight brothers and sisters and his parents in a big stone house in Little Rock. Daddy was a hearty Italian immigrant shoemaker; Momma was a Baptist belle whose heart he had won when he was forty and she was twenty. The whole family went for drives on Sunday afternoons, life was wonderful, and Alexander's only concern was that nothing should ever change — that none of the family would ever go to war or get married and leave the Rock House.

When he was eight years old, he told Santa Claus, "Every Christmas I get toys and things and I play with them and all, but by the time the holidays are over they are all busted and no good at all. Now what I want this year is something that will last forever. I will leave it up to you about what kind of toy, just as long as it lasts for a long long time." Then he remembers to add, "I want a whole lot of snow because we never have any snow and that doesn't seem fair to me." Throughout the weeks before Christmas, he repeated to himself, "For me, two things for Christmas: a toy that will last forever and snow."

Christmas was happy that year: "As I stood there in the dark and saw the tree all lit up, everything seemed exactly right and very fine."

But it did not snow, and soon Alexander began to learn the bitter lesson that nothing lasts forever.

The Exact and Very Strange Truth, a first novel by twenty-nine year old Ben Piazza, is an initiation story in the genre of *Catcher in the Rye, Member of the Wedding,* and *To Kill A Mockingbird.* It is not equal to any of them in quality, but it is within reach. The viewpoint switches at awkward times, control occasionally slips into sentimentality, but then comes a flash of such insight into the heart of a lonely boy that one forgives the flaws and looks forward to Piazza's next novel.

After Daddy died, the family began to break up and everything in Alexander's life began to go wrong. He could not make friends in junior high, and his one big chance, to sing a solo in the Thanksgiving program, was a fiasco. Still in his pilgrim costume, he fled from his jeering classmates and wandered onto the grade school playlot. There he found one of the few people in his life to whom he could talk freely, Jenny Jenny, the colored janitress of Centennial grade school:

> "Jenny Jenny, why don't you sit down here on a swing and swing with me."
>
> "Lord, child, I couldn't get all of me onto that swing. They don't make swings big enough for all my fat."
>
> "I was hoping I would see somebody here. It seems like everybody has already gone."
>
> "Yes, they all gone home. . . . Stand up a minute and let me have a look at you."
>
> Alexander got out of the swing and stood up.
>
> "Well, I do declare you has growed a lot."
>
> "Jenny Jenny, do you really think so?"
>
> "I knows it. . . . Now just turn yourself around and let me get a good look at that costume. Ooh, it is pretty. You are a fine looking Pilgrim. Now don't tell me. Let me guess. You was on the Thanksgiving program over there? Did I guess it?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes I was, and Momma made this costume."

"Well, I is all ears to know how the program was."

"Well, it was just wonderful. I got to sing 'We Gather Together to Ask the Lord's Blessing' and every body clapped and clapped at my song and hollered out 'That sure was good singing.' And then . . ." He sat down in the swing and started to cry.

"What is it, baby? Hmm? Why you carryin' on like that?"

"It didn't happen like that at all. Just when, just when I was supposed to sing my song the turkeys got loose and ran out into the audience and they had to bring the curtain down and I didn't get to sing my song for all the kids. Everything was ruined and besides Momma didn't come like she said she would."

"Shh. It ain't so bad as all that. You'll get another chance to sing for everybody. Your momma was probably too busy to come. Shh."

"But nothing works out at the new school. Do you think they would let me come back to Centennial?"

"No. You done learned all they can teach you here. You too smart to come back here. Besides, I bet you got a girlfrien' over at the new school. Hmm?"

"Well, there is this one girl, Patricia Harper. She is as cute as cute can be. But she doesn't pay me any mind at all."

"Well, she will. It takes time."

"Jenny Jenny, everything is so different over there. I don't know. Listen to what I mean. Have you ever in your lifetime felt that things were going on but that you were not part of what was going on. Like as if you were looking inside a window of a place where people were talking and laughing and going around together and you knocked on the window and nobody seemed to hear you and then you look all around for the door and you can't even find one and so you have to go back to the window and all you can do is watch. You want to go inside and be with everybody but you can't. Do you know what I mean? Did that ever happen to you in your lifetime?"

When Alexander got home that day, he learned that his mother was in the hospital.

As Alexander sits there in the plane from Little Rock to Savannah, he thinks to himself, "Peculiar how things can change so sudden. Things can be one way today and tomorrow be the very opposite. This is the exact and very strange truth. This has been happening in my lifetime now for a long time."

The final section of the novel (including one of the most grotesque, unforgettable scenes in current literature) tells what happened in Savannah.

Geneva Meers

THE PASSION AND THE PARISH

The Final Beast. Frederick Buechner. Atheneum, N.Y., 1965. pp. 256. $4.50.

The young minister of Myron, Theo Nicolet (he is the sensitive doubting type minister), loses his wife in an auto accident and falls in love with Rooney the childless wife of a wealthy but colorless soul named Clem. Clem is such an all around dud that even sex has come spare lately. Seeking maternal fulfillment, Rooney has become the constant companion of the minister's children and the town is soon whispering and wondering. But young preacher Nicolet is also the object of another woman's love, his Jewish housekeeper whose ugly visage and twisted body bear the marks of the concentration camp.

The plot begins to roll from the first pages when Rooney, telling no one but her minister, speeds off to the village haunt of a well known Spiritualist on the ostensible grounds that she will find the secret of getting pregnant. Naturally, Nicolet follows his parishioner out of pastoral concern, also not telling anyone, and when the two meet they head off for the woods to repeat the famous scene between Hester Prynne and Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale, only in this case the woman's sin was not with the minister. It is only the impulse of the moment with a total stranger. Keeping his hands above the neck all the while, the minister forgives her sin and they prepare to return to Myron by separate routes, she to Clem and he to his children and homely housekeeper.

But Satan has not been idle, and the misanthropic newspaper publisher-editor, who writes thinly veiled slander, has laid an accusation of philandering on the shepherd of the flock. By the time Rooney is reunited with Clem in the appropriate bedroom reconciliation frolic, the editor has published his exposé, and the author has unveiled its hidden motive.

The climax occurs the following Sunday when the people of Myron go to the Church of their choice and Irma the housekeeper preaches the sermon.

The novel itself is a kind of sermon whose text is the passage in Revelation describing the beast thrown into the lake of fire after which there shall be no more death. The sermonic theme is resurrection and the joy of the redeemed which comes once they have let the old self be crucified. Not only the minister but each of the main characters is a Christ figure, although appropriately it is Irma, the Jewish refugee, whose agony is the public sign of stumbling and redemption. Yet one has to ask if Buechner has chosen a vehicle heavy enough for the symbolic weight he piles on it. Rooney's slip with the stranger, the minister's indiscretion with her which is never consummated, the editor's cynicism and vengeance, these do not become in Buechner's hands a revelation of the health that is not in us; they are flat, prosaic, little middle class sins whose fault is not passion but lack of it. In this respect the strongest character is Irma, whose hallucinatory memories of the concentration camp sadism she endured lend the dark shadows that give the book its depth.

Buechner's style is alive, his structuring sure, and the pace is fast. Because he tries too much the book is a miss, but he had good form as he aimed.

Larry Shiner

A LOOK OF AGONY

A Child Possessed. R. C. Hutchinson. Harper and Row, New York, 1964. 351 pp. $4.95.

A young couple meet, marry, separate and then experience a brief encounter a decade later. R. C. Hutchinson makes this tired, basic plot into an extraordinary novel.

Hélène Milescu, incipient actress, married Stephan Lopuchine, a displaced Russian aristocrat-turned-Marxist as a protest against the vacuity of his class. They married for love. To Hélène love meant a shared

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bed while to Stephan love was synonymous with total possession. Unable to comprehend Hélène's need for her profession and hounded by his own need for personal involvement with the events of the Thirties in Europe, Stephan permits them to drift apart after five years of marriage.

In the ensuing decade, Hélène becomes a world famous artist constantly on tour. She has just finished an appearance in Saint Louis when a cablegram from a hospital in Switzerland triggers the action. Eugénie, Hélène's and Stephan's defective daughter, might benefit from a new surgical treatment.

At the hospital, Hélène discovers that because they never bothered with divorce, Stephan's signature is necessary if the operation is to be performed. Through Cécile, her friend and Stephan's cousin, Hélène locates Stephan in Marseille where he earns his living, by choice, as a truckdriver. She brings him to Switzerland to meet Eugénie and the hospital staff.

Repelled by the trained-animal performances of patients on whom the operation had been successful, Stephan not only refuses permission but takes Eugénie away from the hospital and home with him to a miserable fourth floor room above a shop owned by Angèle Pascoli, retired harlot, and which is also home to her fat and silly daughter Francie, her senile mother Nita, Abu, precocious son, and Chenu who is too old for the life of a sailor.

In this squalor, Stephan attempts to break thorugh to the dim world of Eugénie which he feels must exist behind her piscine eyes. With this big-headed, uncoordinated, crippled dwarf strapped into the seat beside him, Stephan continues to drive his truck. In bars, cafés, on the highway, in shops, lodgings, truck terminals, a salon in Paris, and at roadside stops, we follow Stephan's patient, near-hopeless efforts to establish some contact with his mute, unlovely daughter.

Hélène, Stephan, and Eugénie dominate the story but memorable minor characters abound: Dr. Kretschmann who Stephan believes offends human dignity with his operations on brains; Dr. Chitry, Stephan's cousin; the ancient Russian General Rozanov who lives with Mme. Labarthe on a proud estate in decay; Dr. Batel; and Cécile, Comtesse d'Avienne.

In their efforts to understand a child possessed, Hélène and Stephan learn that escape from self is the only key to the identity of yourself or others.

A Child Possessed is easy to recommend to those who enjoy a superior conventional novel with deft characterizations and profound undertones which embarrass neither writer nor reader.

Bernard E. Richardson

REFLECTIONS IN A CLOUDY EYE

Flame Rode the Feathers. Cheevie Miniver. Wisteria Press, N.Y., 1965. 729 pp. $8.98.

Mr. Miniver's work of pure and passionate pageantry has its setting in the traditional dark and bloody ground of the mountainous, momentous Southern tidewater region. Its time encompasses the ante-bellum South, of course, but expands to include the intra- and the post-bellum South as well. One might say, indeed, that the story has gone, with its windings, through the *inclusive*-bellum South. For the scope and perspective of its totality assuredly presents a panorama of the legendary South of fable, in all of its paradoxical ambiguity, with its ironic innocence and decay, with its cotton-blossom sweet violence, and with its archetypal gentlemen and ladies, who ride, hunt, fish and fiddle freely, founding dynasties and stocking trout ponds, breeding magnificent mares and stallions, and breeding. It is truly, then, a magnificent book, now praising its famous men.

The hero, Colonel Nelmore Carfotte Crawkner, exemplifies all that was glorious and noble in the Southern mountain-tidewater cotton plantation owner of those days. In him one sees personified many sound but furious old patricians, who became fugitives because they could not bear the violent intruders trying to grind away their civilization to dust. Another agrarian hero, Major Pen Crow-Tatson, becomes the colonel's chief confederate. These men are roused to night-riding activities against their enemies, who, in one troubled July, part of a long, hot summer, put to smoke many county hamlets. During those days, when good men were hard to find, journeymen fighters like the colonel and the major sought to restore their sanctuaries.

Other characters are worth noting briefly. Brethwaite Crawkner, the colonel's son, pathetic and drunken, symbolizes second generation evaporation of the old stock. His mother, Angelooke (nicknamed Narcissus), ever unvanquished, her heart the book's lonely hunter, stands out as a self-contained matriarch of the time. In addition, with lips so red they seem like roses, there is Major Crowson's youngest daughter, the doll-like Verbena, always babied, smelling poignantly of the old traditions, all to no avail. For her lover Brethwaite turns out to be her half-brother, and, delirious with grief, drowns her in the family swamp, among the wild palms and mosquitoes.

Obviously, Mr. Miniver has indeed, so to speak, recreated a time to be looked back upon with nostalgia, a time of Eden. He has recaptured it in all the fine flavor of its lost, pristine, primrose essence. The author's voice creates rooms of the imagination other than real, but whose characters are real nonetheless, and through them readers of this glorious saga of the ad infinitum South will experience timeless rivers in which to eye golden reflections, pouring and pouring from these pages. Carrying readers through the streets of a menagerie of desires, Mr. Miniver moves to the looking-glass that places him on the track of the ultimate fable.

R. B. Weber

LUCY IN CORFU

This Rough Magic. Mary Stewart. M. S. Mill & Wm, Morrow, N. Y., 1964. 336 pp. $4.95.

Lucy Waring, whose first major appearance on the London stage is cut short by an early closing, comes to the beautiful isle of Corfu to visit her wealthy sister. Almost immediately her disappointment is forgotten, as she is caught up in a series of puzzling and alarming events: the carefully secluded presence of the great

MILLERSVILLE COLLEGE
LIBRARY
MILLERSVILLE, PA.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

English actor, Sir Julian Gale; mysterious shots at a playful dolphin in the bay; the drowning of two island boys within a week; and, finally, discovery of the true nature of Godfrey Manning's photographic expeditions.

Mary Stewart spins a good yarn, and this one is no exception, magically woven as it is from such diverse elements as the contemporary London theater and the intelligence of dolphins; the benevolence of Corfu's patron, St. Spiridion, and the political climate of Albania. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is skillfully blended into both setting and plot, while vivid description, suspense, and lively tempo, with just the right touch of romance, are combined to provide the kind of excellent entertainment Miss Stewart's readers have come to expect.

Mary Byerly

THE SIEGE OF HARLEM

The Siege of Harlem. Warren Miller. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1964. 166 pp. $3.75.

One night they closed off the ghetto and made it their own. They put up nineteenth-century style barricades at 97th Street, up at 137th too; installed checkpoints (each with a heroic name); and escorted the last white policeman beyond the border. After that it was no longer their ghetto but their native land. They nationalized housing and halved the rent. Thus they had done, here in these United States, what Africa had done; and they harvested exactly the same gains in human dignity, in pride, in hope of the future, and not in standard of living. Then they fought and planned and starved and froze to protect their liberty. The Majority People *couldn't* attack, you understand; it would be so embarrassing within earshot of the UN, with African oratory ever on guard.

So if outright invasion was out, the bag of tricks of the CIA had to be used instead: "they will come bearing those soiled and tattered banners which read WE ARE DOING THIS FOR THEIR OWN GOOD." There was the Colored Invasion Army, and it got as far as 100th Street, but was contained, cordoned off, and beaten back. Radio Free Harlem described all that could be found in the department stores of Privileged People and collected a crop of defectors. Shipments of bus parts were interdicted, but this only helped with everyone's waistline. Finally cutthroats were sent up by tunnel to roam the streets at night, complete with the U-2' pilot's guide for self-destruction on capture. Not only that, but Adlai himself arrived (he is called "Eddie" and Miller does not appreciate him.) Eddie is prepared to offer the new head of state the governorship of Peurto Rico. The only trick which worked was the one which the CIA has so far neglected in Havana. Harlem lived on, for it saw that freedom consists in having courage. Those blind to this truth might leave, but they were matched by a migration to the new land.

Miller has made it so convincing, might it not someday be tried? He tells Negroes that everything which is of the spirit is within their grasp if they but fight for it; he tells whites that all is precisely as it was before while the ghetto still stands. It is a powerful and compelling political tract with a generous dose of humor. A "committee containing a football coach and a retired admiral come in the time-honored way" to negotiate for the release of the captured CIA assassin; he is finally traded for 100 tons of Grade A ham, which soon stuff the Great African and Pan-Islamic Co-op previously dependent on what food could be grown in a hoed-up Central Park.

Taken as a novel, *The Siege of Harlem* shows up more weakly. The tone of the story told by a grandfatherly Marlow slips from time to time, as it never did in *The Cool World,* and that audience of little Sekou, little Kenyatta, and little Ngomo is rather artificial. Dominating the characters is Lance Huggins, one-time congressman and now father of his country. He alone is not on an African model, but there is no use stirring prejudices against a writer who needs to be read, almost as James Baldwin needs to be read. What Miller tells us about Huggins, down to his habit of fiddling with the microphone while speaking, are those characteristics which a journalist might spot. He is the leader a developing nation needs to keep its spirits high, not especially a human being. His wife, Crystal, is tall, befurred and beautiful, having been rescued from Teaneck bourgeois existence with the aid of a nationalized Hudson Day Line boat. Crystal is a mannikin, though she does have a love affair, which, outside ballet, mannikins do not; Miller's talent as a story-teller is at its best in spinning out the obvious, though his love affair has quite as much of a political as an emotional ingredient. Harlem today and tomorrow is his chief subject, and we remember of Foreign Minister Art Rustram chiefly that "he was a real man, let me tell you, and scarred from head to toe with non-violent scars." But none of the thinness of the human beings detracts from the force of Miller's imaginative and challenging declaration: nothing yet has changed.

Richard W. Reichard

THE BRIGADIER AND THE GOLF WIDOW

The Brigadier and the Golf Widow. John Cheever. Harper and Row, New York, 1964. 275 pp. $4.95.

Beware of the next woman who seduces you while collecting for a fund for infectious hepatitis; she may be after the key to your bomb shelter. So the brigadier of *The Brigadier and the Golf Widow* discovers. The situation—the brigadier's affair with the woman next door — exemplifies a theme of many of the selections in Cheever's book — that men seek escape through a fear of life. The brigadier flees life in one affair after another while ardently hoping that the world will end. In "The Angel of the Bridge," the narrator's fear of life is expressed in his terror of bridges, while his seventy-eight-year-old mother seeks reassurance in a changing world by ice skating with ring attendants. The feature characters of "Bella Lingua" and "Woman without a Country" turn to expatriation as a release from the unhappiness of their lives.

The collection of stories is marked by Cheever's use of clichés — a hick Iowa farmer indignant over Rome's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nude statues ("Bella Lingua"); an over-simple motivation for a husband's infidelity: ". . . if he were to touch her [his wife] tenderly these days she would likely say, 'Ouch. That's where I bruised myself in the garden.'" ("The Brigadier and the Golf Widow"); the United States seen from an unsophisticated foreigner's eyes ("Clementina"); a man returning from work to a household of crying children, burning supper, and a wife sobbing over her ironing board ("The Music Teacher"). Cheever's fantastical imagination redeems the trite devices in most instances, however; in "The Music Teacher," for example, the man subdues his rebellious, resentful household, i.e., wife, by taking piano lessons from a witch.

Two detractions from Cheever's tales are his inability (or lack of desire) to maintain a consistent and plausible point of view and his seeming preoccupation with his status as an author. For instance, he begins "The Brigadier" with "I would not want to be one of those writers who . . ." and later asks, ". . . who, after all these centuries, can describe the fineness of an autumn day?" His problems with point of view appear in "The Bella Lingua": The action is seen from the viewpoint of Streeter but involves the affairs of a woman language teacher, whom Streeter knows but distantly. In order to maintain the point of view, Cheever must have the teacher invite Streeter to a foreknown domestic duel on the pretext that she "would appreciate it if there was a man here" when she confronts her teen-age son and elderly uncle. Several stories display Thackeray-like interjections suitable for an omniscient author when Cheever is attempting to confine the story to a third-person point of view.

The stories are most enjoyable for the imaginative actions in which Cheever involves his Bullet Park characters and settings. He combines almost stock characters (the adulterous middle-aged business exec, society woman organizing charity drives or debutante balls, resentful, overworked housewife, Iowa farmer) with unusual ones (a witch, angel) and creates bizarre series of happenings and strange emotional atmospheres.

Madge Kistner

IT GETS WORSE

The Ski Bum. Romain Gary. Harper & Row, Publishers, N.Y. 1965. 244 pp. $4.95.

With "authentic tenderness" and "deep awareness" the jacket advertisement states, Romain Gary tells the story of two young Americans in Switzerland. It's supposedly a picture of our times. The novel, his eighth. is called *The Ski Bum,* and is about Lenny (no last name), a drifter and draft dodger, and Jess, the American Consul's daughter. There is also Jess's indebted, alcoholic father; a smuggler called Angel; and a group of university students who call themselves The Swiss Puritan Army.

Lenny, the ski bum, who is out of a job for the summer (the rich lady tourists are gone), heads for Geneva. He takes up with a Swiss-Deutsch girl who keeps him fed; but when she wants to talk in bed, he leaves. He can't stand "thought-shit" or sentiment. To the ski bum, "It's a beautiful world, as long as you can get away from it." That's how he feels, until he meets up with Jess. She is twenty-one, a student, cultured, beautiful ("with a strip teaser's body"), and a virgin. Her friends are intellectuals, concerned with The Bomb, The Berlin Wall, and Pope John XXIII. She is thinking, "I'll never talk in bed to any man, no matter what he does."

When she isn't talking American affairs with her friends or selling her father's jewelry to pay debts, she works two days a week at the SPCA. Lenny is loitering around there "irresistibly handsome," and they meet. She takes him home, and luckily her father, just home from the clinic, is out on another binge. The two youngsters have dinner, he makes a pass, she resists. They go to their separate rooms. Jess turns on her radio and hears about Pope John's death. She goes to tell Lenny, and they make love.

It gets worse.

Their love affair continues off and on. After saying, "Goodbye, Lenny. You'll never see me again," through several chapters of the book, their relationship reaches its height with Lenny's comment:

"It's the best sex I've ever had, Jess, I mean it."

"I love you too, Lenny," she says.

This is Gary's "authentic tenderness," a French author's realistic picture of Americans abroad. They are bums, bored students, alcoholic diplomats, queers, and Negroes fleeing segregation. All in two hundred and forty-four pages. To show that he knows what he is talking about — and to give the reader the feeling that what he is reading about is "vital" — there are comments ranging from a sentence to an entire paragraph on the Birmingham race riots, South Vietnam, the Cuban situation, Thalidomide, Pop Art, Marilyn Monroe, Thelonius Monk, James Baldwin, and "Ask not what your country can do for you. . . ."

It is a story that not only includes sex without love, but intrigue (smuggling) without suspense, and murder (Jess's father) with little meaning at all. It's hardly a picture of anything. It's like an accident report, where the details are given but the very heart of the matter is some place else. "Too realistic in its representation of nothing," one character says, and that happens to be a good evaluation of this novel.

David Meyer

BAD CHARACTERS

Bad Characters. Jean Stafford. Farras, Straus and Co., N.Y. 1964. 276 pp. $4.95.

As the title of her book suggests, Jean Stafford is interested in character. In each story she creates a memorable character although the creation and the story occasionally have no strong connection. For example, in "A Reasonable Facsimile," Stafford spends pages delineating the character of a retired professor. The action following the description (the arrival and departure of an unwanted houseguest), however, is not strongly characteristic of the professor; that is, no traits of the professor's personality cause him to act in a way individual from others. He endures the guest as would any number of people too kind, uncertain, or afraid to toss him out.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In contrast to "A Reasonable Facsimile," Stafford shows in "In the Zoo" and "The End of a Career" a closely related interaction of plot and character. "In the Zoo" shows two sisters reminiscing over an unhappy childhood and displays the effects of the unhappiness on the sisters' personalities. In "The End of a Career" Stafford creates the character (or lack of it) of a beautiful woman; the course the woman follows when losing the beauty is entirely consistent with her personality.

One method Stafford uses to delineate her distinctive characters is the accumulation of revealing detail. In "A Reasonable Facsimile," for instance, she describes the professor:

> He belonged in and had, in fact, spent most of his life in fusty parlors where stout, permanent furniture (bookcases with glass fronts, mahogany secretaries with big claw feet, lounges upholstered in quilted black leather, ottomans, immovable bureaus, round tables as heavy as lead) bulked larger than life in the dim-orange light of hanging lamps with fringe. You could see him cleaving through those portieres people used to have that were made of long strands of brown wooden beads; you could see him hanging his hat on a much ramified hatrack.

Through the detailed description of the type of room the man belonged in and a similarly explicit account of the man, Stafford clearly limns him.

The masterpiece of the collection is the concluding novella, "A Winter's Tale." The setting is pre-war Heidelberg and the story is steeped in the atmosphere of the time. The memorable character in "A Winter's Tale" is Frau Professor Galt, who commands a position of power over everyone with whom she is connected. Over her family, she holds money; over the narrator, she holds the conduct reports she sends the narrator's father. The dramatic climax of the story is the revelation of what binds to her the twenty-three-year-old lover who avowedly hates her.

Madge Kistner

SUSPENSE

The Lonely Side of the River. Donald MacKenzie. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1965. 242 pp. $3.95.

Stephen Vener, a ruined lawyer preparing to flee, suddenly finds himself blackmailed by his mistress and her husband, a former client. He is forced into an uncomfortable alliance with his useless wife, Emma, who despises him. To escape his problems and still have some funds with which to begin again, Vener devises a plan to bilk an insurance company. To succeed, he must have an equally desperate confederate. Enter Ross MacLaren, war hero and former star newspaperman who has degenerated into a drifter with a penchant for getting into trouble with the law.

Around these three characters, Donald MacKenzie builds a taut novel of suspense, demonstrating again his ability to handle the complications of the double-cross. The idea of blackmailing a lawyer who can not turn to the police for help is unusual.

Although not as well done as *Double Exposure, The Lonely Side of the River* will please MacKenzie's fans and offers an enjoyable evening's reading.

A New Kind of Anger. Eric Ambler. Atheneum, N.Y., 1964. 311 pp. $4.95.

Piet Maas, a young idealistic Dutch journalist working for an American news magazine, is sent on an impossible assignment. The magazine's object in this enterprise is to discredit Piet. He becomes involved with a beautiful calculating French girl and an assortment of internationally shady characters. The stability of a number of near-eastern governments hangs in the balance as Piet and his friend attempt to make a small profit.

Recommended reading.

One of Ambler's best.

Look Three Ways at Murder. John Creasey. Scribners, N.Y., 1965. 190 pp. $3.50.

A four-man gang robs a payroll messenger of a mere 500£. The guard is ruthlessly killed and the messenger severely beaten. Superintendent Roger West's best clues are lost when two of the four men, apparently in the act of flight, are found drowned in the Thames.

Creasey plays extensively on the similarity between West's family and that of the messenger. By fully developing the character of the murderer in his usual low pressure style, he looks at murder three ways: "The way the police looked at it, the way those who suffered looked at it — and the killer's way."

William A. Stoppel

CRIMINAL HYMINAL

Marriage Lines: Notes of a Student Husband. Ogden Nash. Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1964. 108 pp. $3.95.

Once more old Og
Left me agog
By the manner in which he rhymes.

Taking trite thought,
Juggling till wrought
Are verses that tickle our thymes.

Ogden shows us his knack
Of shuttling words forth and back
Until somehow rhymes are made.

He suffixes
Then prefixes
And poets turn green as jade.

"Lipstick - hips stick
Enjoyable - foible
Foible - enjoible
Simultaneously
Uncomplaineously
Criminal - hyminal."

Og twists our vernacular
In manner spectacular
Recording his wedded thymes.

He is so deft
I'm quite bereft
At the end of Og's *Marriage Lines.*

Armarius

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"ANCIENT SIGNS, INFAMOUS CHARACTERS, NEW RHYTHMS"

77 Dream Songs. John Berryman. Farrar, Straus, and Company. New York, 1964. $3.95.

Sections of *77 Dream Songs* have been appearing in periodicals for some time. The first that I saw were a group of twelve poems in *Noble Savage* four or five years ago, and I can remember very well, I think, the initial impression of those abrupt, packed, off-rhymed, six-line stanzas.

> All the world like a woolen lover
> once did seem on Henry's side.
> Then came a departure.
> Thereafter nothing fell out as it might or ought.
> I don't see how Henry, pried
> open for all the world to see, survived.

I immediately felt that this poem was an introduction to a new aspect of Mr. Berryman's work. The peculiarities of syntax and inversions of language were familiar enough, but they were different: they were placed in a new surrounding in which they created unexpected comic effects or raised a high-pitched question that remained reverberating in the air at the end of the poem. Furthermore there were other idioms, dialogues of voices moving through the poems. Most surprising of all I could see that the poems had a hero, a highly accomplished and often miserable personage often referred to simply as Henry but sometimes known as Henry House or Henry Pussy-cat and almost constantly addressed as Mr Bones by an alter ego bodiless sidekick.

And this book is part of a larger work, "one version" of a long poem to be called *The Dream Songs*. What the total work will be like it is impossible to imagine. However the present arrangement, though not final, is a good one and has thematic unity.

Some of the poems that appeared in periodicals gain tremendously by their placement in the book. The dialogue of the two main voices is amplified. When Henry is fainting with lust over a young lady in a restaurant (4), the considerate voice attempts to console him:

> — Sir Bones: is stuffed
> de world, wif feeding girls.

When, in 36, Henry cries

> The high ones die, die. They die. You look up and who's there?

the voice comes back with the inevitable sympathy:

> — Easy, easy, Mr Bones. I is on your side.
> I smell your grief.

When, by 50, Henry has suffered through loves and wars and hospitals and a meeting of the Modern Language Association, the voice sighs "— Mr Bones, your troubles give me vertigo"; and it is a nice understatement. The beginning of 76 is also very funny in the context of the whole book. Henry is speaking, as we learn from the voice which answers him; and Henry says

> Nothin very bad happen to me lately.
> How you explain that?

And the voice explains it. There is also a third voice, the poet himself, the singer of Henry's wrongs, a kind of omniscient narrator who talks a great deal like Henry. The relationship of that voice to Henry is drawn in the first stanza of the first poem.

It is a remarkable book. The serious and the ridiculous and the absurd and the horrible are held in balance; and what seems wildest fantasy is a moment later commonplace reality. When Henry broods on some gigantic guilt it is a "thing he has in mind / like a grave Sienese face a thousand years / would fail to blur the still profiled reproach of." The reader is invited to shudder; but this stanza follows:

> But never did Henry, as he thought he did,
> end anyone and hacks her body up
> and hide the pieces, where they may be found.
> He knows: he went over everyone, & nobody's missing.
> Often he reckons, in the dawn, them up.
> Nobody is ever missing.

Marvelous puns and sick jokes are side by side. We suddenly realize that we are reading nightmare chants, a level or so above madness usually. *The Dream Songs* becomes, in these instances, an ironic title, for the poems are burdens of mid-twentieth century America and the crazy radioactive world where reality becomes a mad dream and the more usual associations of "dream" are furiously discarded. The stance of the poem is summed up in 46 (a central poem and also one of the twelve which appeared in *Noble Savage*):

> Man has undertaken the top job of all
> *son fin*. Good luck.

A great deal of contemporary experience becomes part of *The Dream Songs*.

Yet the total effect of the poem is not the effect of its best parts, however much some of the sections gain from their placement in the book. The poem, *in its present form,* is too dense, too allusive, too filled with ambiguities that cannot be explained because the poet has not told the reader enough about them. Parts of the poem become a kind of in-joke between Henry and his sidekick. It is as if the poet is finally contemplating the poem he has made and is at the same time deliberately deciding to destroy it because he does not believe in poems anymore. I hope not. This has already happened to enough modern poems.

And the language is too intense for a poem in 77 or more parts. Mr. Berryman needs some other language to throw his dialogue of intense voices into relief, whether it is a traditional one or any one of several modern styles. An unadorned Lowell-like directness would be welcome, particularly in portions of the book that are excessively repetitious. At its worst *77 Dream Songs* is wise-guy verse. The second and third poems are examples. They are bad in the way of nearly all of the poems in Mr. Berryman's last publication, *His Thoughts Made Pockets and the Plane Buckt,* a rather surreptitious-looking pamphlet that appeared in 1958. One of the poems in that work is surely among the worst poems that not just Mr. Berryman but *anyone*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has ever written ("I would not lie still in the wastes of St. Paul / or buy DAD's root beer; good signs I forgive."). At the time that those poems appeared I was convinced that Mr. Berryman had played himself out, for they are far below the level of *The Dispossessed* and *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet*. But I see now how they looked forward to some of the best of the *Dream Songs*. Much that is cranky, even incoherent and silly, in the pamphlet is great in the *Dream Songs* because it has a *persona* that can speak those words and think those thoughts. In spite of my reservations I should like to make it clear that *The Dream Songs* is a vehicle for a limitless range of lyricism for Berryman, that the eighteen-line section is expandable and contractable, that the poem is itself rare (perhaps unique) in being a modern poem with a hero, that it is a work with comedy and suffering and brilliance and awareness. This is a great deal and makes us look forward to the complete work, if it can exist.

Harry Strickhausen

AN APPALACHIA OF THE MIND

The New Improved American. Bernard Asbell. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1965. 312 pp. $4.95.

While it may be doubtful that the world is ever obsolescent, our perceptions of it at any given point of time are often if not always in danger of being outmoded. Each of us has constructed, in greater or less detail, his own social universe which should probably not only be periodically revaluated, but shattered to pieces and reassembled. We can, for that reason, look gratefully to the occasional author who compels us to such acts of demolition and reconstruction.

It is fair to say that contemporary American thought on questions of public policy is presently undergoing an evaluation which leaves few traditional views untouched. We are in the grip of technical and social changes so immense and so far reaching that their outlines are dimly perceived at best.

It is not easy to describe what Mr. Asbell is writing about. It is not enough to say that he is describing the interlocking directorate of American poverty, the familiar questions of unemployment, racial conflict, automation, illiteracy, education, urbanization, and "cultural deprivation." He is concerned with these matters and a good many more. But the central point of this book is inescapable and, in the author's own words, it runs something like this:

> Each system of production has a way of producing people appropriate to it, in approximately the numbers it needs them. . . . Our system of mass production on a beltline, mass addition and subtraction and clerking in cheerless offices, has produced, by the millions, people trained to dull their psyches, anesthetize their dreams, and passively submit their working lives to drudgery with no practical hope of escape from it. . . . The cause of today's unemployment is that we are emerging from a system of production — in the factory and on the farm — that required and produced millions of people of such inferior capability, such limited horizons, such faint ambitions, that they are too retarded to assume the more sophisticated tasks demanded of them today.

All contemporary jeremiads to the contrary, the plain fact of the matter is that automation casts a darker pall over the past than it does for the future. The great proportion of the human race, even in the more "advanced" countries, has been excluded from its most elemental birthright, namely, the status as human beings. Brutalized and exploited at every turn, they have remained in their primitive condition, more useful than oxen but scarcely more elevated. It has not been automation, but the lack of it, which has produced and preserved this condition, and in this respect the typical hostile attitude of the intellectual towards automation is so much nonsense, as any person who has ever worked for any length of time on an assembly line can testify.

No doubt some critics of this book will dismiss its virtues as at best a "popularization" with all the invidious horrors this word excites in the monkish crannies of modern thought. The argument, however, is more easily labeled than dismissed. It is, to be sure, an amalgam of what many other recent writers have already said on the subject of poverty, unemployment, and allied matters. Not all, but too many of these other books have however exuded a faint antiseptic flavor, with their talk of poverty impersonally wrapped in statistics and packaged in plastic. What makes Mr. Asbell's book refreshing is not so much its message as its tone. It is a book about human beings, and about the impact of great changes on human beings. When college freshmen tire of *The Catcher in The Rye* they could turn with considerable profit to this book, but they probably won't.

Joseph B. Board

THE WINDING TRACK OF ACCIDENT

The Green Horizons. Gilbert Phelps. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1964. 255 pp. $5.00.

As a "rapt watcher," Gilbert Phelps travels through Brazil "along the winding track of accident." His ship crosses the Equator and sails on the river Pará to Belém in northeastern Brazil. From Pará his journey is southward. Rambling back and forth in the interiors of Brazil by plane and car, canoe and steamer, and often on foot, he gradually reaches the state of Rio Grande do Sul, which extends to the frontiers of Argentina and Uruguay.

This is the first travel book of the author of *The Heart in the Desert* and *The Winter People,* who as a child in Gloucester, "devoured" the works of nineteenth-century explorers of Brazil. Among these works, H. W. Bates' *The Naturalist on the River Amazons* is mentioned frequently and in detail. In this account of his wanderings, Gilbert Phelps portrays vivid compositions in color — the changing shades of the river waters as his ship approaches the Narrows of the Amazon . . . the palm trees and bougainvillaea, the bright birds and butterflies on the island of Pacquetá . . . the green and orange of the pampas west of Pelotas. The vastness of Brazil makes not only Britain, but the whole of Europe seem a miniature: Marajo Island is as big as Switzerland; Paraná is nearly the same size as Britain.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And it is possible to travel around the world twice without once leaving the Amazonian system, with its eleven hundred tributaries and its flow of water which equals that of twenty Mississippis. The variety and vitality of the country are expressed in the panorama of the stalls in the harbor area of Manaus, with their fish and fruits, their basketry and sandals, their monkeys, parrots, and trays of medicinal herbs; in the profusion of trees in the jungle — the palms and chestnuts and rubber trees, the jacaranda and banana trees; and in the countryside of Belo Horizonte in the state of Minas Gerais, with its tall grasses and purple-flowered weeds, its colorful butterflies and vivid green parakeets.

The ship left Liverpool in a February gale but the heat of Brazil is like the breath of an animal. It beats from the jungle "like a green thundercloud in spite of the humidity and the masses of vegetation." Gradually the body succumbs to lassitude. Beads of moisture collect under the face of the wristwatch. It is a physical effort to breathe.

In Manaus, touring the harbor, Gilbert Phelps discovers a floating city complete with shops, gay houseboats identified as floating brothels, and a floating factory where Brazil nuts are prepared. Beyond Tapurucuara he visits a mission and an Indian village at the threshold of the dense jungle. From Sao Luis, the capital of Maranhao (called the "Athens of Brazil" because it is the home of many of the country's leading writers) he travels to Fortaleza, the capital of Ceará. (It is from Brazil's northern states, Ceará among them, which are subject to droughts, that refugees are driven southward in search of food and work.) In Recife, a colloquy is held with the well-known scholar Gilberto Freyre. The leisurely peregrinations continue —to Bahia (Salvador), the "city of churches," to Rio de Janeiro where the landscape seems to be in continual flux; to Brasilia, capital of Brazil since 1960, but, despite its architectural showpieces and its administrative significance, strangely hollow and desolate—a "ghost city"; to Sao Paulo, the largest industrial city in South America, and so cosmopolitan that Rio seems parochial in comparison. Toward the end of his travels, Phelps rides on the remarkable railway built by the Brazilian engineer Soares; tours an "Ancient City" created by the forces of nature; visits a sect of Russian Old Believers in Ponta Grossa; discovers a "German city," Blumenau, in Santa Caterina; and journeys to Pôrto Alegre with its skyscrapers, and through the flat countryside of Pelotas.

In contrast to the definitive guidebook and the dreary exactitude of statistical reports and data written by demographers, linguists, and economists, *The Green Horizons* is a romantic account of journeys through Brazil. The traveler is knowledgeable; his book contains lucid narratives of local history. In one passage, the *favela* beyond Rio is toured. In this squatters' settlement alone, over 15,000 people live in squalor, disease, and hunger. A Brazilian economist is quoted as estimating that over 70% of the population of Brazil live below subsistence level. Yet the peoples of this vast country, like its economic and social problems, hover in the background of the book, although from time to time images are illumined and deepened: the orphans of the droughts, swathed in newspapers, sleeping on the side streets of Fortaleza; the shoeshine boys in Sao Luis, each with a box of his own design, and a variation on the skills of the trade; and the Negro family on the steamer to Rio: "The Negro took out a large comb and pulled it through his son's woolly hair, and then with touching solicitude began to clean out his wife's ears with a grubby handkerchief."

Gilbert Phelps is an unobtrusive guide, but unmistakably British in his metaphors (the gourds of the calabash are of the same shape and size as the rugby football); in his self-consciousness in the presence of poverty; in his embarrassment when, with a hole in his sock from which his big toe protrudes, he is directed to take off his shoes and participate in the *candomble* ceremonies in Rio. It is as a naturalist and as a devotée of the country's art and architecture that he approaches Brazil, and he confesses upon departure that for him the real Brazil is to the north with its heat and jungles, with "the muddy waters of the Amazon, the dirt and decay of the northern cities, the rotting palm thatch of the huts and the sweat of emaciated brown bodies." There his boyhood dream of exploration and discovery is fulfilled. And just as the explorer Bates had quickened his desire to travel through Brazil, so Gilbert Phelps, in this sensitive, perceptive narration, achieves this same effect for those of this century for whom the "age of discovery" still obtains.

A. Farrell Borenstein

JOY

The Joy of Children, text by Pearl S. Buck. John Day, 1964. 247 photographs, 211 pp. $7.50.

The book is just that — a joy of children; if you're interested enough to pick it up, you will enjoy it. You'll probably skim through the photos first, a lot of very good ones, and then the text, with a closer look at the photographs.

Pearl Buck writes with enough conviction to avoid the over-sentimentality that could so easily spoil a book of this type; children are cute but, thankfully, there are few cute photos here.

You may not agree with each of the points Miss Buck makes about the development and needs of a child, but you will probably finish the book with a reawakened awareness of the very basic questions children force upon us. You might even finish with a resolve to go out and adopt a handful.

The photographs are part of an exhibit prepared for the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth. From a wide range of sources, they are mainly well chosen and reasonably well laid out in a comfortable format. The power of the pictures cannot be denied, but the individual photographers whose work is displayed here could well be disappointed that their sparkling prints come out so dully on the paper used for the book. In the day of the $5.95 novel it is not reasonable to hold the price of a photo book to $7.50 by not giving the photographs their proper treatment.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The impact of feeling sustained by the combination of word and picture is sometimes broken by an apparently posed photo that detracts from the over-all impression of insight that the photographs give. This, along with the less than best print quality, makes the book a good one rather than the great one it has the right to be.

There are enough individually good photos to make the book worthwhile browsing. The text makes it much more. You may not want to buy it for your own book shelf, but, if you read it once, you'll return to it for contact with a reality we too often ignore.

Russell E. DuBois

SOGGY COOKIES

Farewell to Foggy Bottom; The Recollections of a Career Diplomat. Ellis Briggs. David McKay Company, New York, 1964. 306 pp. $4.95.

This is the kind of book that ought to be read rather than reviewed. It is not the memoirs of a diplomatist, in the conventional sense, and it is not a "scholarly work," a happy condition which is really to the credit of the author. The book is best summed up in these words of Christian Herter, in his Foreword: The "present book is a compilation of two somewhat different and yet related matters of substance. The first has to do with [the author's] own conclusions as to the importance of our career Foreign Service and how it could be made more effective. The second is a series of anecdotical [?] reminiscences of particular episodes in his own career which sometimes seem extraneous, sometimes just amusing, and sometimes illustrative of the serious conclusions which he has reached after an amazingly varied and useful experience."

"Varied and useful" may be a considerable understatement. Mr. Briggs' career in the Foreign Service spanned thirty-seven years and seven ambassadorships until his retirement in 1962, just as he had been named ambassador for the eighth time. His powers as raconteur must be of formidable dimensions, and the chapter titles alone make good reading, *e.g.*, "How to Tell a Bureaucrat from the Bouillabaisse," "A Hair Shirt Ill Becomes the Eagle," "The Care and Feeding of Dictators," to mention a few.

The book is also at times a volcano of righteous indignation; an honest emotion too seldom employed in the bland age we inhabit. One of the favorite indoor sports in recent years has been to abuse the Foreign Service, an easy target because the recipients of the criticism too often as government servants have to suffer in silence or at best reply politely to the critics, whether travelers abroad, or Know-Nothing die-hards at home. It must therefore be a source of great satisfaction to store up a professional lifetime of replies and then to discharge them from the sanctuary of retirement.

Most of the author's views turn on that well-known phenomenon, the great change that has taken place in the art of Diplomacy during the Twentieth Century. Up to the present century, Diplomacy had been a confidential (sometimes clandestine) activity pursued by a small group of professionals, most of whom came from similar backgrounds and who despite their differing nationalism, shared a common set of assumptions concerning statecraft. Then along came World War I, Woodrow Wilson, and the Bolsheviks; the game alas has never been the same since. Statesmen now play to the multitudes, the crusading spirit is abroad in many lands, and Everyman wants to dabble in Diplomacy.

Mr. Briggs, like many diplomats in recent years, has given us a written account of his quarrel with what could be called the New Diplomacy (although he himself would dispute the validity of the expression). His syllabus of errors is long, and certain.

He is against overstaffed Embassies, Bureaucracy, the Crusading Spirit in Foreign Policy, an indiscriminate attachment to foreign aid, the Peace Corps, and any kind of a soft line toward the Communists. The U.S.I.A., A.I.D., and the C.I.A. (the Propaganda, Handout, and Skullduggery Establishments) are too meddlesome to his taste. There are too many American ambassadors (over one hundred now compared with only thirteen when he entered the Foreign Service) and too many amateurs have received appointments. This has resulted in an inevitable decline in the prestige of an ambassador, which has been further undermined by too frequent shifts of post and by the unnecessary travels of Secretaries of State, Vice-Presidents and Special Envoys.

Most of, probably all, these objections are well taken. Some important matters unfortunately are omitted entirely, *e.g.*, the demoralizing effect of the McCarthyite attacks on the State Department and the Foreign Service. Many of the criticisms overshoot the mark (even "good' amateurs are viewed with skepticism), and the reader is often left wondering just what the author would put in place of the smashed idols.

One reason why the mode of diplomacy has changed (rightly or wrongly) is that the world has changed, rightly or wrongly. The "New Diplomacy" is in this sense every bit as much a reality as "The National Interest," and backward glances at the Good Old Days (which, one suspects, were not quite so good as they appear in retrospect) are not enough.

It would be unfair to leave the impression that all Mr. Briggs has done is to fulminate, deny, and reminisce. Many of his points, *e.g.*, his discussion of Latin America and the American Guilt complex, are notably positive. Most of the points he raises have been made before, but usually by academics with little actual experience in the daily activities of a diplomat. His book gives a highly readable account from a less academic perspective.

The real strength of the book lies, however, in its tacit assumption that, in the realm of foreign affairs, we have been engaged for some time in a number of activities which we have accepted uncritically and which may be of dubious value. It can be boiled down to the unpleasant prescription that all the good will in the world is no substitute for knowing what we are doing and where we are heading.

Joseph B. Board Jr.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEWCOMB OUT OF MORISON

Iwo Jima. Richard F. Newcomb. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston N.Y., 1965. 289 pp. $5.95.

Iwo Jima by Richard F. Newcomb is a para-history of the attack and defense of a tactically valuable eight-square-mile island. Iwo was considered necessary by the U.S. Army Air Force for its attacks on the Japanese home islands. It offered a base for the P-51 fighter escorts and an emergency base for the longer ranged B-29s.

Fully aware of the impending attack, the Japanese were able to prepare carefully for it. They did not hope to save Iwo, but intended to buy time to perfect other strong points in their inner defense line. Japanese strategy, by this time, was to make ultimate victory as expensive as possible for the Americans. Preparations for the battle of Iwo Jima have something of the aura of a set-piece medieval battle.

Newcomb's book has three sections. The first deals with the preparations made by both sides, the massive American build-up, complete with full news coverage, and the Japanese attempt to make the island as difficult as possible to capture.

The second and third sections detail the landings and the battle. The confusion of the landing, supply and communication; and individual valor are vividly portrayed as Newcomb intersperses facts and personal incidents, both American and Japanese. Lack of smooth chronology is disconcerting. Newcomb has researched his material but occasionally leaves the reader wondering as to fact or author's fantasy.

The author seems to side with the Marines in the conflict over support given by the Navy. Whatever the value of the attacks made by naval aircraft on the Japanese cities at the time of the Iwo Jima landings, one wonders whether additional bombardment would have aided the hard-pressed marines considering the results bombardment of all types had on the well-designed Japanese fortifications.

Newcomb has written a readable, well-documented, personal commentary on the Iwo Jima campaign. His acknowledged debt to Samuel E. Morison is obvious. *Iwo Jima* is recommended to those who have a continuing interest in the Pacific theater of World War II.

William A. Stoppel

A LOGICAL CONCLUSION

The Strange Tactics of Extremism. Harry and Bonaro Overstreet. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1964. 315 pp. $4.50.

The Overstreets turned their diligent research techniques on the Radical Right like a prying searchlight. Approximately half of the text is devoted to the John Birch Society and Robert Welch. The rest of the book examines lesser, but equally dangerous, organizations.

A careful comparison of Welch doctrine and methods of operation reveals to the Overstreets that these methods are patterned closely after easily verified Communist methods.

A re-reading of Welch's *Blue Book of The John Birch Society* confirms this connection and the Overstreet's findings.

Using only Welch's standards of judgment and the techniques which he recommends, in astonishment, this reader is forced to the incredible conclusion that Robert Welch is an arrogant, blatant Communist and that the John Birch Society is an obvious communist front organization. It is time for the Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the FBI to set their monumental forces to work on this. A clarification is needed from someone other than Robert Welch.

Armarius

FOR THE RECORD

Those curious about a once-illustrious older contemporary of Henry Purcell will find their curiosity slaked by Westminster's *Music of Matthew Locke* (WST-17082). The record contains four solemn and tedious suites for viola and some mildly pleasant catches and glees. It appears that everything Locke did Purcell did better. The performances by the Elizabethan Consort of Viols and the Golden Age Singers (under the veteran Margaret Field-Hyde, who also lends her worn soprano to the proceedings) smell, as Scott used to say, of the lamp.

Purcell himself makes an appearance (or rather reappearance) in Vanguard's inexpensive Everyman Classics label in four suites drawn from his incidental music to *Abdelazer, The Married Beau, The Gordian Knot Untied,* and *The Virtuous Wife* (SRV-155SD). The record holds thirty-six separate pieces, all brief, all ingratiating. The performance by Fritz Mahler and the Hartford Symphony (formerly available on Bach Guild) is merely adequate. One would have liked fewer players and greater elegance.

Elegance and style are supplied aplenty by Karl Münchinger and the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra in two records containing the six Concertinos (here named "Concerti Armonici") attributed to Pergolesi (London CS 6393 and 6395). Whoever wrote them was a master of late Italian baroque style. Despite the uncertain authorship the works have been growing in popularity, and the present recording is the third or fourth of the entire set. It is also the best. The second side of the second record is given over to the two ravishing Flute Concertos also attributed (with rather more certainty) to Pergolesi — ravishingly performed by Jean-Pierre Rampal.

A long-needed recording of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* finally arrived, and it was worth waiting for (Bach Guild 70666/7). This great setting of Dryden's poem in honor of St. Cecilia, the patroness of music, represents the master at the top of his form. It is a series of heroic frescos celebrating the pleasures of Bacchus, war, love, vengeance, and finally music — all contained within a single dramatic framework. Alfred Deller, counter-tenor turned conductor, proves to be a master of the Handel style. Everything about this performance is right, and the three soloists (Honor Sheppard, Max Worthley, and Maurice Bevan) are worthy of the music they sing.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

More Bach cantatas? Well, two more at least: No. 35 (*Geist und Seele wird verwirret*) and No. 42 (*Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats*). These deserve mention not only because they are better-than-average (No. 35, I must reluctantly confess, is a knockout) but also because they are stunningly performed by Hermann Scherchen conducting a Vienna orchestra and a stellar cast (Teresa Stich-Randall, Maureen Forrester, Alexander Young, and John Boyden). Personally I think that Scherchen has a reputation far exceeding his accomplishment, but I could not prove my point with this recording. It has brilliance, clarity, scrupulously clean playing and singing. And Maureen Forrester of the whipped cream voice has to be heard to be believed. No. 35, by the way, is as much a buoyant organ concerto as it is a cantata. The label is Westminster, the number WST-17080.

Joseph Haydn does well this quarter, with two recherché symphonies, eleven string quartets, and a newly-discovered cello concerto. The Cello Concerto in C Major is a stunning piece, despite its relatively early date; it is an entirely worthy companion to Haydn's famous D Major Cello Concerto. Unfortunately, on the London recording (CS 6419) it is companioned by Benjamin Britten's new Symphony For Cello and Orchestra, Op. 68, a knotty, cerebral, unjoyous work. The soloist in both is Mstislav Rostropovich and in the Haydn concerto he makes his cello sing and dance wondrously. Benjamin Britten himself is the very capable conductor. The two symphonies, No. 39 in G minor and No. 73 in D Major ("La Chasse") are well performed by David Blum and the Esterhazy Orchestra (Vanguard VSD 71123), but they are cliché-ridden works; G Minor, so tragic a designation for Mozart, was apparently just another key for Haydn. The quartets are another affair, however. Vox (SVBX 555) offers all six of Opus 20, as well as the first two of Opus 1, as the first entry in a projected ten-volume series of Haydn's entire quartet output. The playing by the Dekany Quartet, a group formed specifically to record the series, is excellent — distinctly better, in fact, than that of the Schneider Quartet, which has recorded much of the same material for the Haydn Society. And the price is modest: $9.95 for the three-record set. Another set of quartets, the three of Opus 55, has been issued on one record by Westminster (WST-17084). These strong and shapely pieces have not been recorded before; an English ensemble, the Allegri Quartet, does them ample justice.

The three charming but flimsy early violin sonatas by Schubert, published after his death as Opus 137, are given a reading by Alexander Schneider and young Peter Serkin, Rudolf's talented teenager, making his recording debut (Vanguard VSD 71128). Peter plays gracefully, but Alexander's heavy hand (rhymes with ragtime band) is deadly. Not recommended.

From London (OSA 1257) comes an album titled *The Age of Bel Canto* featuring Joan Sutherland and two young colleagues, the mezzo Marilyn Horne and the tenor Richard Conrad, in a fantastic collection of arias, duets, and trios ranging from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Miss Horne, despite a rather hard production, is a virtuoso almost worthy of Joan. The same cannot be said of Mr. Conrad. Despite a certain limp flexibility that allows him to run up and down the scales with the two ladies, his voice can only be described as that of an inexperienced Kenny Baker. Whoever is pushing Mr. Conrad has made a big mistake; he is simply not in the same class as the two ladies. But the album has so much to recommend it — a spine-chilling aria and cabaletta from Verdi's *Attila*; a duet from Rossini's *Semiramide* that ticks along like a jeweled time-piece; lovely, lovely things from Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* and *La Straniera,* Handel's *Semele,* Weber's *Der Freischütz* (sung by Sutherland in quite creditable German) — you ought not to be put off by the mediocrity of the tenor. Richard Bonynge conducts the New Symphony Orchestra of London, and conducts well, even if he did get the job because he is La Divina's husband.

Another collection as brilliant in its own way is Vanguard's *The Virtuoso Piano* (VSD-71119). We often hear about the "legendary" pianists Henri Herz, Sigismond Thalberg, and Anton Rubinstein, but nobody plays their music. Earl Wild repairs the omission and throws in selections by Leopold Godowsky, Johann Hummel, and Ignacy Paderewski for good measure. Mr. Wild is an "out" pianist. He has spent too much of his time specializing in Gershwin and semi-pop. That's a pity because he is possibly the greatest living virtuoso of the keyboard. At least no one — not Horowitz nor Richter — can outdo him. He seems to have grown a third arm to play some of this music, especially Godowsky's "Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes from Johann Strauss' *Artist's Life.*" Listen and marvel.

Teresa Stich-Randall turns in a glowing account of the monologue "O bleib, geliebter Tag" and the final scene from Richard Strauss' late opera *Daphne* (Westminster WST-17081). I want to save my superlatives about this opera for a forthcoming complete recording. Let me merely say that the soprano gives this radiant music everything except that final touch of rapture that perhaps only Elizabeth Schwarzkopf could give it. Stich-Randall is also heard on side 2 in Strauss' *Four Last Songs,* and again to excellent account. The conductor is Laszlo Somogyi and the orchestra that of the Vienna Radio.

Finally, Benjamin Britten's 1947 comic opera *Albert Herring* recorded complete under the direction of the composer (London OSA 1378). The libretto, suggested by a short story of Maupassant, is mildly amusing in a stereotyped way: anther tale of the worm that turns. Britten's music, after a few hearings, sounds eloquent and witty. He uses a chamber orchestra and a cast of thirteen. Peter Pears sings the title role well, although he is a bit long in the tooth to be playing so young a part. Other soloists include Sylvia Fisher, Owen Brannigan, April Cantelo, Joseph Ward, and Sheila Rex. The sound is superb and the whole thing has the immediacy of a live performance.

David Johnson

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AFTER MANY A SUMMER

Standing before this ruined Victorian house,
I think of other Sundays, afternoons
When the children sang, arranged in their proper
rows
Upon this porch too flimsy, today, for one child,
Much less a choir. Out past the kiting field
Long slender grasses flourish thistle and rose
And wily insects about a dreary pond
Where swans, whose names I have forgotten, rode
Lordly upon the water, which then was blue.

The garden, behind the house, is disappearing,
Slowly, under the green of wind and the weather;
The statues have been removed. The children also
Are gone, and gentlemen, and ladies in white
Whose names persist in the wind merely as names:
Their faces now are wholly photographs.
As for the swans, no more than a trace remains:
One sees them riding, here and there, only
Some attic rug, some washed-out counterpane.

Charles Wright

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If You Like Books, You'll Love BOOKS.

(It's a Newspaper.)

There **is** something new under the sun. It's BOOKS—a rousing, truly original monthly newspaper now in its second year of publication.

Some of our readers believe that BOOKS is the funniest thing they've ever read. Some believe that its sophisticated approach to books and authors makes BOOKS "a very 'in' publication and certainly the most interesting publication we've ever read." James Purdy believes that "BOOKS has shown very unusual methods . . . you actually mention authors whose books do not sell 1000 copies an hour . . . How can you last? Isn't America already beautiful enough without you?"

Everyone agrees that BOOKS is the one newspaper people who really care about books can't get along without. (The nicest compliment that we received during our first year was the number, the very large number of subscribers who were so pleased with BOOKS that they ordered gift subscriptions for their friends.)

BOOKS believes:

1) You are well educated.
2) You no longer slavishly follow the best-seller lists.
3) You want to know everything that's published, especially by the university presses.
4) You agree that books, authors, and their seminal ideas are newsworthy.

Unlike the review periodical which acts as a filter (and even then it reviews only the smallest portion of what is being published, of what educated people are really interested in), BOOKS removes the barriers and opens the channels of information. BOOKS is for people with a broad range of specialized interests—and a sense of humor.

News and feature articles in BOOKS make books come alive. We've reported on:

—J. D. Salinger's new novel.
—What happened in the nation's intellectual community when Velikovsky published his worldshaking "Worlds in Collision."
—The big book on campus, "The Reasonable Adventurer," about Princeton's class of '54.
—The new Edward Lewis Wallant award.
—The LSD books.
—How Saul Bellow almost became Rock Hudson.
—The distinct and indispensable contributions of Jewish-American writers, "All That Glistens is Gold, Malamud, etc."
—Shel Silverstein's fantastic children's book, which took four years to get published.
—New York's Literary Critics: How books are chosen for review, and how they are reviewed, by Time, Newsweek, Book Week, Saturday Review, The New York Times, The New Yorker.
—Joan Baez' battles.
—Yale professor Paul Weiss' 27 proofs of God's existence.
—Profiles of 13 notable suicides.
—Merle Miller's story of how people really act toward each other in the 20th Century.
—Where do writers write? A profile of Lore Segal's and other people's houses.
—Rechy and Gover represent current literary extremes. An article by Terry Southern.
—"Ulysses" decision was landmark in right-to-read controversy.
—A letter from Lenin.
—"I have assumed that the slaves were merely ordinary *human beings, that innately Negroes are, after all, only white* men with black skins, nothing more, nothing less."
—Playboy Press schedules Lenny #$%—&* %$#'s autobiography.
—Philosopher's inside view of university presses.

IN EVERY ISSUE OF BOOKS

1) Two-page "Cocktail Party," dazzling, inside talk of books and publishing.
2) "Critics' Scoreboard," what book reviewers coast-to-coast are saying. (Some non-New York critics get very personal; most contradict each other.)
3) "The Local Scene," reports on literary activities in communities around the country. (Already reported on: Cleveland and Hartford.)
4) A summary of almost every hard-cover and paperback book published—IN YOUR FIELDS OF INTEREST—in the month they are published. NO OTHER PUBLICATION DOES THIS. The summaries further close the vast communications gap between publisher and reader.

Since BOOKS is not available at newsstands, why live without us. Send us the coupon today. We believe that you'll like BOOKS very much.

Order Form

THE AGEL PUBLISHING CO., Inc.
598 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022

Please send me BOOKS every month for the next year. I have enclosed my check for $2.92.

Name .....

Address .....
(PLEASE PRINT)

City .....

State ..... Zip .....

☐ I prefer a 2-year subscription. My check for $5.50 is enclosed

MILLERSVILLE COLLEGE
LIBRARY
MILLERSVILLE, PA.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED